

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXEGETICAL

METHOD IN ENGLAND: 1496-1556

by

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Abstract

The practice of biblical exegesis underwent a dramatic metamorphosis in the first half of the sixteenth century in Europe. This evolution was brought about by the convergence of several factors including: 1) The development of humanism; 2) An emphasis on literacy, and the quest for a vernacular Bible; 3) The invention of moveable type; 4) The publication of critical texts of the Old and New Testaments in the original Greek and Hebrew; and 5) The general atmosphere of change and progress which characterized the period.

In England this hermeneutical revolution was accelerated by the public lectures of John Colet at Oxford University in the late 1490's. Colet's desire for a simplicity of meaning, in sharp contrast to traditional interpretation, made his addresses on the Pauline letters truly unique. One of those influenced by the Englishman was the young humanist Desiderius Erasmus. Wedding his love for the "New Learning" with Colet's approach, Erasmus, although maintaining allegorical interpretation as a means by which to reconcile the Old and New Testaments, made a massive impact upon exegesis through his critical text of the Greek New Testament, and his annotations and paraphrases on the same.

The first major English Protestant exegete to influence his homeland was William Tyndale. Although deeply influenced by Luther in his early works, Tyndale's great capacity for linguistic analysis allowed him to develop more independence in later years. In the half decade prior to his execution in 1536, Tyndale's theological opinions, especially his theology of the conditional-covenant, had a profound influence upon his exegesis.

The final section of this research surveys the writings of six leading Anglican reformers: John Bale, John Bradford, Thomas Cranmer, John Hooper, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley. Although quite able to do serious systematic exegesis, these men devoted the lion's share of their time and energy to the urgent practical needs of the English Reformation under King Edward VI. Nevertheless, they did make some advances on the interpretation of figurative passages in the New Testament, due to a prolonged debate over the meaning of passages relating to the eucharist question. The one area of real development was in apocalyptic interpretation. John Bale's commentary on Revelation proved to be a very influential synthesis of medieval and modern approaches to the Apocalypse and set a "historicist" pattern for future British interpreters of the book.

I declare that the research found herein is mine, and that this thesis is the work of my own hand. I have followed the advice of my supervisors as to appropriate content, and I have made minor stylistic alterations as suggested by various proofreaders.

Nathan P. Feldmeth

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It is with a sense of profound thankfulness that I acknowledge those who have helped to make this thesis a reality. From the first letter of inquiry to the Faculty of Education up to the present moment, the staff at New College, the University of Edinburgh, have been most kind and helpful to me. My special thanks go to Dr. Peter Matthews and Mr. David Wright, my advisors as a post-graduate student. Their direction, positive criticism, encouragement, and interest have been deeply appreciated.

TO

JOANNE, HEATHER, AND LINDSAY,

MY FELLOW TRAVELLERS AND BEST FRIENDS

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To begin a lengthy degree program after one has a family requires incredible sacrifice. My previous wife Joanne and Heather and Lindsay, your love and support have followed me through the most difficult times. Your love and support have been the greatest source of strength and comfort. I am deeply indebted to you for your love and support. I am deeply indebted to you for your love and support. I am deeply indebted to you for your love and support.

I fully recognize that without the help of my friends, Mr. and Mrs. John Ross, Heather and Lindsay, the completion of this thesis would have been impossible. I am deeply indebted to you for your love and support. I am deeply indebted to you for your love and support. I am deeply indebted to you for your love and support.

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have come to fruition. Their loyalty to our dream has been a true expression of love.

Finally, it must be recognized that relatively few people throughout history have had the opportunity to devote over four years of study to one exciting question or topic. I am firmly convinced that this great privilege has been afforded me by the grace of God.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Allen. Opus Epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami, edited by P.S. Allen.
- Archiv. Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte
- En. Cor. Ioannis Coleti Enarratio in Primam Epistolam S. Pauli ad Corinthios, edited and translated by J. Lupton.
- En. Rom. Ioannis Coleti Enarratio in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos, edited and translated by J. Lupton.
- Holborn. Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus Ausgewählte Werke, edited by H. and J. Holborn.
- LB. Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia, edited by J. LeClerc, and published by Lugduni Batavorum.
- Nichols. The Epistles of Erasmus, edited and translated by F.M. Nichols.
- Opera Dionysii. Ioannis Coleti Super Opera Dionysii, edited and translated by J. Lupton.
- PL. Patrologiae Latinae, edited by J.P. Migne
- P.S. The Parker Society editions of the English Reformers.
- Ratio. Erasmus', Ratio verae theologiae
- Sac. Ioannis Coleti Opus de Sacramentis Ecclesiae, edited by J. Lupton.
- Opuscula. Ioannis Coleti Opuscula Quaedam Theologica, edited and translated by J. Lupton.
- W.A. D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, edited by H. Bohlaus, et al.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to trace the changes in exegetical method which occurred during the first half of the sixteenth century in England. By "exegetical method" we mean to designate the process by which the "meaning" of a given passage is extracted from the Scriptural text. Exegetical method can be roughly divided into two subsections: 1) The general approach to interpretation; and 2) The tools used in making an analysis. The former category deals with the presuppositions the interpreter brings to the text, his hermeneutical theory. The essential questions in this area include the exegete's doctrine of Scripture, his view of authority, and his feeling for the relative importance of the "spiritual," vis-a-vis the "literal," sense of the text. The tools of analysis fall into two categories: linguistic, and contextual. Linguistically the exegete uses ancient and modern languages to draw meaning from the text by seeking to understand the lexical and etymological distinctives of terms, as well as the grammatical relationships which make up the basic units of thought. Contextual analysis involves the attempt to place a given text in its proper ideological and historical settings, as well as charting the author's message in the forme du genre used to express it. A third element in the consideration of a writer's exegetical

method is his choice and use of authorities. Although this is tangential to the work of exegesis in the strict sense, it is highly significant by way of elucidating the various paths of interpretation which have been etched upon the landscape of Church History over its first fifteen hundred years.

The procedure employed in this analysis is to examine the exegesis of nine leading writers who directly influenced the evolution of biblical interpretation in the first five decades of the sixteenth century in England: John Colet, Desiderius Erasmus, William Tyndale, John Hooper, John Bradford, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, John Bale, and Thomas Cranmer. During these years a dramatic hermeneutical shift issued in a new era of biblical studies. The men considered here were on the cutting edge of that movement.

The value of such research was underlined by Basil Hall who in 1970 gave this analysis:

The history of biblical exegesis is one of the most neglected fields in the history of the Church and its doctrines...The history of biblical exegesis in both Catholicism and Protestantism would provide profounder insights for the understanding of the age of the Reformation than the more usual study of the polemic of attack and counter attack which was largely peripheral to the religious needs and aspirations of the writers of the time.¹

As Hall intimated, work in this area has been scant. Research devoted to exegetical method in early sixteenth century England

¹B. Hall, "Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries," The Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 2, The West from the Reformation to the Present Day (Cambridge: The University Press, 1963), p. 76.

is indeed rare.¹

The scope of the study

The chronological boundaries observed here are 1496 to 1556. The first date marks the inauguration of John Colet's Oxford lectures on the Epistles of Paul. The latter terminus ad quem is the year of Thomas Cranmer's death. The reign of Queen Mary Tudor furnishes a neat break in the development of exegesis, dividing the leading Protestant thinkers into two groups: martyrs and exiles. The sixty year range of this investigation is covered in a broadly chronological way, beginning with Colet and Erasmus, moving on to Tyndale, and concluding with the most prominent Anglican Reformers. John Bale, who lived until 1563, is included with the pre-Elizabethan divines due to the fact that his major contribution to exegesis, a commentary on the book of Revelation, was quite popular and influential in the Edwardian period.

Definitions

In order to avoid ambiguity, certain terms which recur repeatedly throughout the course of this presentation require special definition. These terms include: "literal sense,"

¹E.R. Gane has written a survey study entitled "The Historical Significance of the Scriptural Exegesis Employed in Some Sixteenth Century Sermons," an unpublished Ph.D. thesis for the University of Nebraska, 1976. Gane's research is limited to sermonic material and deals with few of the personalities selected for consideration here. Material relating to specific individuals will be cited in due course.

"typology," "allegory," inspiration," "symbolism," and "illumination."

The phrase literal sense, when applied to the text of Scripture, refers to the intent of the original author of the passage. It is not meant to convey a "literalist" approach which treats figures of speech, parables, and symbols as if they were to be understood literally. By the designation "literal sense" we mean the normal sense of the author's words. Thus the term "literal" is not restricted to narrative or didactic portions of Scripture. A Psalm, a parable, or even an apocalyptic passage can have a "literal sense."

Typology is ". . . the establishment of historical connections between certain events, persons or things in the Old Testament, and similar events, persons or things in the New Testament."¹ Typological exegesis is the search for these "historical connections." The main presupposition of typological exegesis is that Jesus Christ is the key reference point to all the history of God's interaction with man. Christ as the promised Messiah gives meaning to God's purpose in creation and redemption. Real historical events in Old Testament history are seen by the typologist as sacramental foreshadowings of future historical events in the life of Christ. Perhaps the classic example of the relationship of type to antitype is found in the historical correspondences between Abraham's intended sacrifice of his only son

¹G.W.H. Lampe, and J.K. Woolfcombe, Essays on Typology (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 39.

Isaac, and the passion of Christ.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son....He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.¹

The typologist sees the historical correspondences or linkages between the two events as more than mere coincidence. Although the former event had significance in and of itself, the typological meaning of Abraham's act could not be understood until the crucifixion of Christ.

Allegory, in contrast to typology, "...is the interpretation of an object or person or a number of objects or persons as in reality meaning some object or person of a later time, with no attempt made to trace a relationship of 'similar situation' between them."² To the interpreter using the allegorical method of interpretation the literal sense often functions only as a mere covering for the hidden inner truth. His task is to penetrate the outward "letter" in order to reach the spiritual "substance" within. When interpreted in this way, Scripture takes on the character of a body of oracles, a book of riddles or secret puzzles to which the reader must find clues.³ The allegorist then is free to interpret the text symbolically without the restraints of context, historical accuracy, or the original intent of the author.

¹Hebrews 11:19 (N.A.S.V.). The Greek text reads: "...ὁθέν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν παραβολῇ ἐκομίσσατο."

²R.P.C. Hanson, Allegory and Event (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1959), p. 7.

³Ibid.

Inspiration is the doctrine which holds that the individual writers of Scripture experienced a divine superintendence over their work. This is not necessarily seen as overriding human individuality, as in the case of mechanical dictation. Thus a book of the Bible could be both inspired and flawed by poor grammar and other inaccuracies which would not detract from its inspiration.

Symbolism is the attempt to draw a moral lesson from a real event, historical personage, or thing mentioned in the Scripture. Largely a homiletical device, a symbol does not have the historical correspondences of a type, yet it is rooted in the literal sense.

Illumination is the process in which the reader of a passage of Scripture may be given divine insight into the meaning of the words, thus the text becomes illumined for him.

The sixteenth century, a climate of change

The vigorous growth and evolution of exegetical method which took place at the dawning of the sixteenth century was precipitated by the convergence of a number of interrelated historical factors. Perhaps the most powerful impetus of all was a general atmosphere of change. European society and culture were vigorously shaking off the last vestiges of the medieval cocoon and undergoing a dramatic metamorphosis at all levels and in most fields of endeavour. If we take the year 1500 as our historical reference point, we will notice the tremendous concentration of innovative men in this period. At the turn of the century,

Leonardo da Vinci, the artist, inventor, and epitome of the "Renaissance man," was forty-five years old. Christopher Columbus, who eight years earlier set foot on the New World, was forty-five. Nicolaus Copernicus, who would write Concerning the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres some forty-three years later, was twenty-seven. In Italy the new art of modern statecraft was developing in the fertile mind of Niccolo Machiavelli who was thirty-one. In fine arts, Michelangelo was just gaining real fame at twenty-five, while Raphael was still an apprentice of seventeen. The year 1500 was the time of the greening of humanism with such giants as Johannes Reuchlin, the great Christian Hebraist, who was forty-five; and Desiderius Erasmus, who at thirty-three was just beginning to catch the vision for a "Biblical humanism." Finally, the men who were destined to shake the Church to its very foundations were still students: Luther was seventeen, Zwingli one year his junior, while Martin Bucer was but a child of nine. John Calvin, who would continue the work of these early pioneers, was not to be born for nine years.

Those factors which more specifically affected changes in exegetical method in England included: 1) The Lollard movement in its emphasis on a vernacular Bible, literacy, and independence in biblical interpretation; 2) The rise of "Biblical humanism" which provided both linguistic tools with which to do exegesis and a more accurate text of Scripture in the original languages; and 3) The invention of printing by means of moveable type, making possible the inexpensive dissemination of Bibles, grammars, commentaries, concordances, etc., throughout the western world.

The Lollards

The diverse sect of English dissenters known as the Lollards were an important if inconsistent force in the preparation of their homeland for the sweeping changes in biblical studies which occurred in the sixteenth century. Drawing initial inspiration from John Wyclif (d. 1384), Lollardy was a popular movement which gained numbers rapidly in the late 1300's, causing the Church of England considerable concern. Although driven underground after an unsuccessful uprising in 1414, the Lollards remained active in England until well into the sixteenth century. Their influence upon biblical exegesis can be seen in at least three areas: 1) The doctrinal formulations of their early leaders; 2) The emphasis placed on literacy and the production and circulation of books; and 3) Their role in establishing a tradition of critical dissent in regard to ecclesiastical authority.

It is difficult to speak of a Lollard doctrinal position on the major issues of theology.¹ It has been suggested that it is perhaps best to speak of a "set of more or less consistent attitudes," rather than a carefully thought out theological system.² Yet we do find, in the early scholarly leaders at least, some clear doctrinal stepping stones which marked a hermeneutical path for the "poor priests" to follow.

The theological mortar which held the "consistent attitudes"

¹H.M. Smith cites evidence that within a generation of Wyclif's death there was a wide variance among Lollards on such crucial doctrines as original sin and communion; Pre-Reformation England (London: Macmillan and Co., 1938), p. 268.

²J.A.F. Thompson, The Later Lollards, 1414-1520 (Oxford: The University Press, 1965), p. 239.

together was the basic Wycliffian conviction that the soul of man has independent and direct access to God.¹ Such access included prayer, personal confession of sin, and the comprehension of God's written revelation. Wyclif wrote, "As Christ opened the Scriptures to the Apostles, the Holy Ghost teaches us the proper understanding of Scripture."² With such an illumination of the Spirit a simple Christian could have a better and more effective understanding of the Bible than a doctor of divinity.³ In that each man had the ability, with divine help, to comprehend the meaning of the text, so each man should have the right of access to it. H.B. Workman writes, "As every man is God's tenant in chief, holding directly from his Lord, Wyclif has no place for an intermediate consensus of interpretations expressed in the traditions of an historic Church."⁴

The production and circulation of a vernacular Bible was vigorously opposed by the Church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This opposition is perhaps best represented in "William Butler's Determination Against Biblical Traditions," written in 1401.⁵ Butler's argument rested on the inability

¹See D.B. Knox, The Doctrine of Faith in the Reign of Henry VIII (London: James Clarke and Co., 1961), p. 89.

²Wyclif, Tractatus De Civili Dominio, III:26 (London: Wyclif Society, 1904), vol.4, p. 622.

³Ibid., III:19, vol.4, p. 384.

⁴H.B. Workman, John Wyclif, A Study of the English Medieval Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926) vol. 2, p. 153.

⁵In Deanesly, The Lollard Bible And Other Medieval Versions (Cambridge: The University Press, 1920, 1960), pp. 399-418.

of the layman to understand the Bible due to the fact that the untrained human intellect could never comprehend the subtleties of Scripture.¹ As he put it, ". . . there is no means of bringing the common people, who read in the Holy Scripture, to the knowledge of those same Scriptures."² Such a view was rooted in the pre-supposition that the literal sense of the text was useless and a "mystical" interpretation was always in order.³

Wyclif rejected such reasoning, labelling its advocates "Antichrist's tyrants."⁴ Although it is clear from his sermons that Wyclif held to the four senses of Scripture, he put primary emphasis on the literal as the basis for all deeper understanding. The literal sense could be taken in two ways. ". . . sometimes according to first appearances . . . at other times according to the understanding of it which an orthodox teacher acquires by the instruction of the Holy Ghost."⁵ For Wyclif the "spiritual sense" was not to be found through subtle reasoning, but by the illumination of the Spirit. Deanesly traces this position back to the Norman Minorite Nicholas de Lyra (d. 1340), whose Postillae perpetuae were a major influence on the "first generation of scholarly

¹In Deanesly, The Lollard Bible And Other Medieval Versions (Cambridge: The University Press, 1920, 1960), pp. 405, 411.

²Ibid., p. 405, trans. Deanesly.

³Ibid., p. 417.

⁴H.B. Workman, John Wyclif, p. 152; see also, Wyclif, Tractatus De Civili Dominio, III:26, vol. 4, p. 622.

⁵J.W. Lechler, John Wyclif and His English Precursors, trans., P. Lorimer (London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1878), pp. 31-32.

Lollards."¹ John Purvey (d. 1428), a close associate of Wyclif and the probable translator of the Lollard Bible, appealed to Lyra often to justify the centrality of the literal sense in exegesis, as well as using significant portions of the Postillae's prologue in his own work.²

It followed quite naturally from this emphasis on individualism, the illumination of the Spirit, and the centrality of the literal sense, that the ability to read God's revelation was of primary importance to the Lollards. The humble Christian could comprehend the true meaning of the Bible if he gave his mind wholly to the task. Wyclif wrote that believers ". . . should stand to the death for maintaining of Christ's Gospel, and true understanding thereof, gotten by holy life and great study."³ An early follower of the master added:

For the science of God cometh of diligence of reading:
truly ignorance of God is the daughter of negligence.
Truly if not all men reading know God, how shall he know
that readeth not?⁴

John Foxe praised the "fervent zeal" of the Lollards, ". . . as manifestly may appear by their sitting up all night in reading and hearing. . . ." God's Word.⁵

¹M. Deanesly, The Lollard Bible, p. 166.

²Ibid.

³Wyclif, The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted, ed., E.D. Matthew (London: The Early English Text Society, 1880) pp. 258-59.

⁴E. Colledge, "'The Recluse,' A Lollard Interpolated Version of the Ancren Riwe," Review of English Studies, vol. 15 (1939), p. 9.

⁵John Foxe, Acts and Monuments of these latter and perillous dayes, touching matters of the Church, ed., S.R. Cattley (London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1838), vol. 4, p. 218.

From the records of their persecutions we find that the Lollards were active in the production and circulation of books. According to Foxe, one Richard Belward was accused in 1424 of among other things, keeping ". . .schools of Lollardy in the English tongue. . .and a certain parchment-maker bringeth him all the books containing that doctrine from London."¹ The most common issue from these copyist schools were individual books from the New Testament. The Epistles of Paul, James, the separate Gospels, Acts, and Revelation were easily obtainable.² Many "heretics" became "living books" as they memorized entire portions of Scripture such as The Apocalypse and the Epistles of Paul.³

Family reading, usually including relatives and servants, became a common Lollard practice. Margaret Aston has proposed that such a gathering might well have been the most common way in which literacy (and with it heresy) was acquired.⁴

As early as 1414 the two criteria for possible indictment of Lollards were the possession of heretical books, and the ability to read in the vernacular.⁵ In 1426-27 "Ordinances" were passed at St. Albans against ". . .false preachers and possessors of books in the vulgar tongue," due to the fact that

¹Ibid., vol. 3, p. 585.

²Ibid., vol. 4, p. 218; see also J.A.F. Thompson, The Later Lollards, p. 113.

³Ibid., pp. 184, 224, 225, 235, 238-39 .

⁴M. Aston, "Lollardy and Literacy," History, vol. 62 (1977), p. 357.

⁵Ibid., p. 361 .

heresy was rooted in ". . .the possession and reading of books in the vulgar tongue."¹ As Aston remarks, "It was as a vernacular literate movement that Lollardy had gathered momentum and it was as a vernacular literate movement that it was suspected and persecuted."²

Many Lollard books survived attempts made by the Church to "destroy the heresy in flames," and were reprinted by Reformers in the sixteenth century who were anxious to prove that their movement had historical precedents.³ Some tracts were republished as they stood while others were rewritten, often without acknowledgement, to serve a new purpose. These works were usually polemical in nature and centered on three main themes: 1) The symbolical view of the eucharist, 2) The need for a Bible in English, and 3) An attack on papal authority.⁴ The Reformers were especially pleased to discover that their spiritual antecedents had amassed a considerable body of evidence supporting the necessity for a vernacular Bible.⁵

¹M. Deanesly, The Lollard Bible, p. 327.

²M. Aston, "Lollardy and Literacy," p. 361.

³The influence of Lollard writings upon the course of the Reformation in England is treated by M. Aston in "Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?," History, vol. 49, (1964), pp. 149-170.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 157f.

⁵The second part of a Lollard work entitled A.B.C. to the spiritualte, was called "A compendious olde treatyse shewynge howe that we ought to have the scripture in Englysshe." This tract was a version of John Purvey's defence of the translation of the Bible. See M. Deanesly, The Lollard Bible, pp. 437-45.

Perhaps the most significant direct Lollard influence upon the Reformers was in the area of apocalyptic interpretation. When Luther came across an anonymous manuscript entitled Commentarius in Apocalypsin (1390), he thought enough of the antipapal work to publish it with his preface attached.¹ His purpose in this was to show the world that ". . . we are not the first to interpret the papacy as the reign of Antichrist. . . ." ² The Commentarius led Luther to reexamine the book of Revelation, and to write a revised preface to it. No longer was the Apocalypse a book shrouded in mystery. The reformer came to see John's Revelation as a prophetic chronicle of Christendom from its inception to the final judgement.³

Lollard apocalyptic literature had even more influence in England. Foxe reported that a Lollard commentary on Revelation was found among the books of a heretic in Lincoln in 1520.⁴ Another work, The Lanterne of Lyght, written between 1409 and 1415, was published in London in 1530. Following a detailed treatment of the Antichrist, the anonymous Lollard author develops a doctrine of two churches: the true church of God, and its Satanic counterpart. The true church is destined to experience persecution

¹Luther, ed., Commentarius in Apocalypsin ante Centum Annos aeditus (Wittenberg: 1528).

²Ibid., sigs. A2v.-A3r.

³See R. Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse (Appleford: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), p. 43.

⁴Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 4, p. 236.

at the hands of the church of Satan, but in the end will emerge victorious. The dual themes of "two churches," and the "persecution of God's own," were clearly echoed in the English Reformation.¹ John Bale, whose commentary on Revelation, The Image of Both Churches, developed this dualism, also built his interpretation of the "millennium" (Revelation 20) along lines laid down by Wyclif in De solutione Sathanae.²

Thus in Lollardy the humble Christian, through intensive study of the Scriptures and with the aid of the Holy Spirit, could understand the literal sense of the text, and any deeper meaning based upon that sense. Such a doctrine of individual access to the truth of the text promoted a literacy movement among the Lollards as well as the manufacture and distribution of books, some of which were to play a significant role in the coming Reformation. Yet there was in Lollardy a deeper and more subtle leaven at work. Wyclif and his followers planted doubts about the ultimate authority of Rome. In so doing, they gave the knight, the artisan, the clerk, the journeyman, even women, a new freedom of thought. As Aston writes, "The emphasis on return to the scriptural text as the basis of authority, and the Bible translations which resulted from Wycliffe's inspiration, were probably the most important part of Lollard heritage."³

¹See R. Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, pp. 54-67, 252-53. As we shall see below, these themes were promoted by Luther whose work undoubtedly influenced English commentators.

²See Wyclif, John Wyclif's Polemical Works in Latin, ed. R. Buddensieg (London: Wyclif Society, 1883) vol. 2, pp. 391-408.

³M. Aston, "Lollardy and the Reformation," History, vol. 49 (1964), pp. 153-54.

Due to the fact that their movement was built upon literacy, Lollard ideas were transmitted widely and with some degree of consistency. Dissent in the English Church had begun. When Lutheran ideas began to make their way across the channel and into the minds of Englishmen, a beach-head had already been won.

Biblical humanism

Humanism, as it developed in fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe, was a movement which placed emphasis upon, and confidence in, human intellectual and artistic achievement. The rediscovery of the "classical world" led to a desire to see a new "Golden Age" begin--an age built upon the firm foundations of Greek and Roman civilisation. By recovering these foundations the humanists envisaged that a cultural, intellectual, and socio-political revitalisation would occur. In specific terms, humanists advocated an approach to learning which stressed the languages, history, rhetoric, poetry, and ethics found in the best of classical literature.

In Italy, where the movement began, the early focus of humanism was on the pagan classics; while in northern Europe in the sixteenth century an amalgam of evangelical piety and classical scholarship produced a Christian, or Biblical humanism. As the sources of man's wisdom were to be found in the writings of the Greek philosophers, so the Biblical humanist sought the purest truth in a return to the sources of the Faith, the Holy Scriptures. These men wanted to discard the layers of Scholastic interpretation which had accumulated for four hundred years, and return to the essence of Christianity. As

Erasmus, the "Prince of humanists," expressed it, "I have tried to call back theology, sunk too far in sophistical subtleties, to the sources and to ancient simplicity."¹ Two primary foci of emphasis emerged in achieving this goal: 1) The need for a working knowledge of the languages of Scriptures; and 2) The need for accurate texts of the Old and New Testament books, in their original languages.

In their attempt to explore the Scriptures in the original language, the Biblical humanists drew heavily upon the scholarly resources developed in the revival of classical learning. The recovery of Greek in Europe began towards the end of the fourteenth century in Italy.² Manuel Chrysolaras (1353-1415), a Greek scholar exiled from his homeland, was invited to lecture on the classics at Florence in 1396. One of his pupils, Leonardo Bruni (1374-1444), who was to become the university's chancellor, developed into a first rate Greek scholar who made translations of Aristotle, Demosthenese, Plato, Plutarch, and Basil, the Church Father. Under the influence of these men and their disciples, Italy became the fifteenth century center for Greek studies.

With the advent of printing, the tools of linguistic study were produced quickly, accurately, and at relatively little expense. Chrysolaras' highly influential Greek grammar,

¹Allen, epis. no. 1891, vol. 7, p. 208.

²It is quite true that an interest in biblical languages was present in the late middle ages, and that the Council of Venice in 1312 provided for instruction in Greek at the Universities of Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Salamanca, and at the Curial University, but nothing came of this. See L.W. Spitz, The Renaissance and Reformation Movements (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1971), p. 153.

Erotemata was first printed in 1478, followed by three additional editions before the year 1512.¹ In 1495 C. Lascaris' Grammar came off the press of Aldus Manutius, and Erasmus issued a similar work by Theodore of Gaza in 1516. The same year saw Richard Croke's Tabulae Graecas literas compendio discere cupientibus sane quam utiles, the first Greek grammar written by an Englishman. Two years later the German reformer Philip Melanchthon came out with an elementary grammar. In France, Guillaume Budé (1468-1540) advanced the language with his Commentarii Linguae Graecae of 1529. Budé's "Commentaries" consisted of several thousand critical analyses of grammatical and syntactical questions, illustrated by examples from Greek texts. Robert Estienne continued the French contributions with his "Alphabets" of Greek, a clear presentation of the elementary rules of grammar. In all nearly forty separate grammars were circulating in Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century.²

The new century saw an emphasis on trilingual colleges in many of Europe's universities. In Spain, Cardinal Francisco Ximenez de Cisneros (1436-1517) founded the University of Alcalá, which included a school for the study of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Frederick of Saxony, desiring to see his new University of Wittenberg gain in prestige, endowed the school with chairs in

¹Chrysolaras' grammar was the text used by Erasmus in his first class in Greek at Queens College, Cambridge, in 1511. See Allen, epis. no. 233, vol. 1, p. 473.

²See Appendix I. See also B. Hall, "Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries," The Cambridge History of the Bible, The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, ed. S.L. Greenslade (Cambridge: The University Press, 1963) pp. 42-43.

three languages. At Cambridge, John Fisher (1469-1535), the bishop of Rochester and president of Queen's College, persuaded Erasmus to begin teaching Greek there in 1511. Five years later Richard Fox (c. 1447-1528) bishop of Winchester, founded the trilingual Corpus Christi College at Oxford, where a lector publicus was appointed to instruct the University in Greek. In France, Budé persuaded Francis I to found a Collegium Trilingue in 1530, which became known as College de France. Such schools helped to produce a new generation of scholars ready to continue and refine the "New Learning."

England's resources in Greek scholarship began to improve dramatically as the sixteenth century began. When Erasmus visited London in 1505 he was pleased to report finding ". . . five or six men who are sound scholars in both languages [Greek and Latin] such as not even Italy has at present."¹ His references must have been to William Grocyn (c. 1466-1519); William Latimer (c. 1460-1543); Thomas Linacre (c. 1460-1524); William Lily (c. 1468-1529); and Thomas More (1478-1535). These men were remarkably similar in background. All but More had studied in Italy in order to gain the mastery of Greek. All were Oxford men. And More alone of the group was not in orders. Strangely, at the time Erasmus wrote concerning them, only Lily was engaged in regular teaching.²

¹Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 185, vol. 1, p. 415.

²For a brief history of the Greek education of this group, see: A. Tillet, "Greek Studies in England in the Early Sixteenth Century," The English Historical Review, ed. by C.W. Previte-Orton (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1938), pp. 221-24.

When, in 1514, Erasmus announced his intention to leave Cambridge, Fisher desired Latimer to take the vacant post. Latimer demurred, suggesting that it would be better to procure an Italian. As evidence of Latimer's ability, Erasmus announced that he would rather be taught by the Englishman than by any Italian.¹

Although there was some significant work in Old Testament Hebrew exegesis carried out in the late medieval period,² a genuine revival in interest in the language of the Jews among Christian scholars did not occur until the beginning of the sixteenth century. Unlike Greek, Hebrew was not an emphasis of early Italian humanism, and although the Jews actively propagated Hebrew studies in their own culture, most teachers were reticent to instruct Christians. In like manner, the Church was suspicious of Hebrew, and especially of Jewish instructors.

The only Hebrew grammars available to the Christian scholar at the end of the fourteenth century were written in Hebrew, and thus of little use to the beginning student. In 1501 Aldus Manutius published Introductio Utilissima Hebraice Discere Cupientibus which was a brief Latin Primer of Hebrew only eight leaves in length, yet it was a start. Two years later Conrad Pellican made a rather unsatisfactory attempt at a similar work. The real impetus in Christian Hebrew scholarship came from the tireless efforts of Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522). A gifted, multi-

¹Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 243, vol. 1, p. 486.

²See: B. Smalley, "The Bible in the Medieval Schools," The Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 1, The West from the Fathers to the Reformation, ed. by G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), pp. 216-19.

talented man, Reuchlin served as a lawyer, a chancellor to the Duke of Württemberg and in the latter years of his life as a professor at the universities of Ingolstadt and Tübingen. Working under the tuition of Jewish scholars, Reuchlin became an accomplished Hebraist. Perhaps his most important contribution to the study of biblical Hebrew was the publication of De Rudimentis Linguae Hebraicae in 1505. As its name suggests, De Rudimentis was a basic book written to aid those with a rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew to advance in the language. The work was divided into three sections: the first, a description of the Hebrew alphabet; secondly, a Hebrew-Latin dictionary; and finally, a brief section dealing with grammar. The publication of this "tool" was truly the beginning of Christian Hebrew studies in Europe. In 1518 Reuchlin published a more advanced grammar entitled De Accentibus et Orthographia Linguae Hebraicae.¹

Reuchlin's efforts were motivated by the conviction that the Old Testament could only be fully understood if read in the original language. Every translation of the Bible he saw as in effect diminishing its value.² He felt that the very Hebrew letters if properly understood, contained secret messages. This inner meaning could not be communicated in a translation.³ Philological and grammatical study therefore, were an absolute necessity. As he wrote in De Accentibus:

¹ See Appendix II.

²W. Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), pp. 72 and 85.

³Ibid., pp. 84-85.

It is no small thing that the knowledge of grammar brings to light. It is clearly the true and authentic meaning of scripture which . . . is revealed by the innate property of every word, not to mention . . . the numerous secrets for which you may hunt, beginning not only from the words, but almost from single parts of the letters....¹

Therefore, argued Reuchlin, it was absolutely essential that Hebrew be included in the offerings of every university, along with Greek and Latin.

The study of Semitics was further advanced by Sebastian Münster (1489-1552) with the publication of an Aramaic lexicon in 1514, which was followed by a grammar in 1527. Perhaps Münster's greatest contribution came through his Latin translation of the grammatical works of the eminent Jewish scholar Eliás Levita² entitled, Opus Grammaticum consummatum ex variis Elianis libris concinnatum. This work gave Christian Hebraists access to the finest grammarian of the era.

Hebrew studies in England were somewhat limited in the early years of the sixteenth century.³ There were, however, a few men with an interest in the language. Cuthbert Tunstall (1474-1559), bishop of London and Durham, although rather conservative

¹Reuchlin, De Accentibus et Orthographia Linguae Hebraicae (Hagenau: Thomas Anshelm, 1518), p. iii.

²Elijah Levita (1469-1549) was a German born Jewish grammarian who settled in Padova, Italy. There he wrote a manual of Hebrew grammar in 1508 which was well received by both Christians and Jews. Forced to leave Padova, he went to Venice in 1509, and then on to Rome. In 1518 he produced Sefer ha bahur a treatise on Hebrew grammar, as well as a table of irregular verb forms of the Old Testament. Two years later he issued Pirque Eliyahu, a work on Hebrew phonetics.

³See G. Lloyd Jones, "The Influence of Medieval Jewish Exegesis On Biblical Scholarship in Sixteenth Century England: With Special Reference to the Book of Daniel," an unpublished Ph. D. thesis, the University of London, 1974, pp. 38-87.

towards the Reformation, was sympathetic to the "New Learning." After his foundational studies in Oxford and Cambridge, Tunstall spent six years in Padua working in Greek and Hebrew. He was described as ". . .a very fine Grecian, well seene in the Hebrew tongue. . .and a profound Divine."¹

The first Christian to teach Hebrew in England was Robert Wakefield (d. 1537). After receiving his arts degree at Cambridge, Wakefield studied abroad and taught in Germany and France. He held the post of professor of Hebrew at Louvain in 1519, and moved from there to Tübingen before being recalled to England in 1523. After taking his B.D. at Cambridge, Wakefield read lectures on Hebrew there in 1524. He ended his career at Oxford, teaching Hebrew. His two works on Hebrew grammar, Roberti Wakefeldi, sacrarum literarum professoris eximii, Oratio de laudibus & utilitate Trium linguarum, Arabicae, Chaldaicae, & Hebraicae (1524), and Syntagma de Hebraeorum codicum incorruptione (1530), were both published by Wynkyn de Worde of London. The former book holds the distinction of being the first publication in England which employed printed Hebrew letters.

Textual criticism

The second major emphasis of Biblical humanism, the need to secure an accurate text of Scripture, was rooted in the work of the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla (c. 1406-1457). It was not until the sixteenth century, however, that the impor-

¹T. Goodwin, A Catalogue of the Bishops of England (London: 1615), p. 669.

tance of textual criticism of the Bible was recognized. This change came about mainly through the indefatigable efforts of Erasmus and Ximenes.

Valla, trained as a philologist and rhetorician, used his keen mind to probe the authenticity and accuracy of documents traditionally held to be above criticism by the Church. In 1440, Valla's De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio questioned the veracity of the document which alleged that Emperor Constantine deeded the Lateran Palace to Pope Sylvester as a gift, the famous "Donation of Constantine." Valla's skepticism was based upon the presence of certain terms in the document which, he argued, could not possibly have been in use in the time of Emperor Constantine. He concluded, therefore, that the "donation" was an eighth century forgery, much to the consternation of the Roman see.

Four years later Valla laid the foundation for critical method in linguistical study with his Elegantiae Linguae Latinae. By employing a collation of manuscripts, an analysis of language, and a sensitivity to historical context, Valla sought to determine more precisely the intent of a given classical author. This work became a standard handbook for later humanists.

Valla's greatest contribution to biblical studies came when he turned a critical eye toward the Latin Vulgate of Jerome. Noting that numerous verses cited in Jerome's works differed from those same references in the Vulgate, Valla reasoned that errors, misunderstandings, and slips must have crept into the official Latin text through the carelessness of copyists. His

next step was to compare various Greek and Latin codices of the New Testament. Valla's method was to begin with a phrase from the Vulgate and compare it to the same words from the Greek text. He would then pause to discuss the possibility of an error, or to explicate an obscurity. The results of this investigation were organized in a manuscript work entitled Adnotationes in Novum Testamentum, which was completed about 1444.¹ This book was virtually unknown for sixty years.

Erasmus' interest in literary criticism was stimulated by a study of Valla's Elegantiae. As early as 1489 the Dutch humanist was singing the praises of Valla, who, he wrote, ". . .with great industry, zeal, and labour repelled the absurdities of the barbarous, rescued buried literature from destruction, and restored to Italy the splendor of her former eloquence."² It is little wonder then that Erasmus was overcome with excitement when he happened upon a copy of Valla's long lost Adnotationes while rummaging through the Praemonstratensian abbey of Parc outside of Louvain, in 1504. "I was taken on the spot with the desire to communicate my discovery to all the studious," he recalled.³ A year later Erasmus published his find under the title Laurentii Vallensis. . .in Latinam Novi Testamenti interpretationem ex collatione Graecorum exemplarium

¹See W. Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translations, pp. 132-34.

²Erasmus, LB, vol. 1, col. 115.

³Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 182, vol. 1, p. 381; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 381.

adnotationes.

As the book went to press Erasmus anticipated the protest which would be raised among the religious establishment by its publication: "They will call it an intolerable act of temerity that this grammarian, after harassing all other branches of learning, cannot keep his captious pen even from sacred literature."¹ What is so shocking, Erasmus asked,

. . .about Valla's action in making a few adnotations on the New Testament after comparing several old and good manuscripts? After all it is from Greek sources that our text undoubtedly comes; and Valla's notes had to do with internal disagreements, or a nodding translator's plainly inadequate renderings of the meaning, or things that are more intelligibly expressed in Greek, or finally, anything that is clearly corrupt in our text.²

It may well be that by 1505 Erasmus had already resolved to follow Valla's lead in New Testament textual criticism. The publication of the Adnotationes served as a ready means of breaking the ice and testing the waters of Church opposition before jumping in himself.

Eleven years after presenting Valla's work to the scholarly world, Erasmus was ready with his first contribution to textual criticism, the monumental Novum Instrumentum, which came off Froben's press in Basel in 1516. This three-part work placed a critical Greek text of the New Testament in one column, parallel to which was a fresh Latin translation based upon the Greek. The bottom third of the page was given over to annotations on

¹Ibid., p. 410.

²Ibid.

the text. His motive in all of this was to furnish Christian scholars with a purer version of the New Testament. "One thing the facts cry out. . ." he wrote,

is that often through the translator's clumsiness or inattention, the Greek has been wrongly rendered; often the true and genuine reading has been corrupted by scribes who are half-asleep. . . .It is the nature of textual corruption that one error should generate another.¹

Although some work had been done to meet this need, it was far from complete. Erasmus explained:

Lorenzo [Valla] only annotated selected passages. . . with what they call a light touch. Lefevre published notes on the Pauline Epistles only, and translated them in his own way; then added notes in passing if there was any disagreement. But I have translated the whole New Testament after comparison with the Greek copies, and have added the Greek on facing pages, so that anyone may easily compare it. I have appended separate annotations in which I . . .show that my emendations are not haphazard alterations.²

Although the first edition was liberally peppered with printer's errors and limited by the paucity of good manuscripts available to Erasmus at Basel, it was the first complete printed critical edition of the Greek New Testament. The numerous errors in this edition are explained by the fact that the publisher, Froben, was rushing Erasmus to get the manuscript into print. Cardinal Ximenes had completed the New Testament portion of the great Complutensian Polyglot in Greek in 1514. Its publication, however, was stalled for six years awaiting papal permission. Froben, wanting to gain the prestige of being the first to publish

¹Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 337, vol. 2, pp. 713f.

²Ibid.

such a work did not allow sufficient time for proofreading and correction. Erasmus devoted the rest of his life to, among other literary projects, correcting and improving the Novum Testamentum, as all subsequent editions were called. Before his death in 1536, five editions of the work had been published.

The significance of Erasmus' achievement was immense. The fact that a Greek New Testament was available in book form, meant that copies could be sent to libraries containing invaluable manuscripts where variant readings could be recorded in the margins. The books could then be gathered and the textual emendations collated. Although in some ways the New Testament text of the Complutensian Polyglot was superior to Novum Instrumentum, the Erasmian work was by far the more influential of the two, due to the fact that he, unlike Ximenes, was willing to question the authority of the Vulgate. This is most commonly illustrated by the fact that Erasmus not only doubted the authenticity of the "*woman caught in adultery*" passage, but removed it from the text of John chapter eight. Ximenes neither removed it from the Gospel, nor even questioned the reading.¹ On a more pragmatic level, due to its availability, Erasmus' text became one of the basic tools of the early reformers in Northern Europe.

Textual criticism of the Old Testament in the sixteenth century was confined mainly to correcting the obscure readings and copyist errors present in the Latin Vulgate by means of

¹See E.G. Rupp, "The Bible in the Age of Reformation," in The Church's Use of the Bible, Past and Present, ed. by D.E. Hineham, (London: S.P.C.K., 1963), pp. 75ff.

comparison with the Massoretic Hebrew text. This was facilitated by the publication of the Complutensian Polyglot in 1520, and by the efforts of Reuchlin.

The team of scholars working under the direction of Ximenes in the production of the Polyglot arranged each page of the Old Testament portion to facilitate textual comparison. The Vulgate text was printed in the central column of each page, flanked by the Hebrew on the left, and the Greek Septuagint on the right. The lower third of the page was organized with the Targum presented on the right hand side and the Latin translation of it on the left. As with the New Testament section, there was no attempt made to correct the Vulgate other than the simple juxtaposition of the three texts. The thankless task of pointing out the errors in the received Latin text was left to the humanist Reuchlin.

As presented above, Reuchlin was convinced that every translation of the original Hebrew of the Old Testament diminished its value. This was especially true, he felt, of the Vulgate. "We Latin people drink from the morass, the Greeks from brooks, the Jews from the wells," he wrote.¹ Reuchlin's criticisms of the Vulgate's text were pervasive. There was hardly one page of his dictionary where he did not correct the Vulgate.² Such activity brought Reuchlin severe criticism and censure from the religious community. This reaction is accounted for to some

¹Quoted in Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation, p. 82.

²L. Geiger lists about two hundred such corrections of the Vulgate in Reuchlin's work. See Johann Reuchlin, sein Leben und seine Werke (Leipzig, 1871), p. 122, note #3.

extent by the anti-semitic bias of the age. Some Christians felt that the Jews had purposefully tampered with the text, especially in those verses relating to the coming Messiah.¹ Even if one granted that the Vulgate was imperfect, they asked, how could one be sure that the Hebrew text was not itself corrupt? This question was not laid to rest until the end of the eighteenth century, when textual criticism demonstrated the relative purity of the Massoretic Text.

Despite the doubts of some, Hebrew texts of the Old Testament were printed and read by an emerging host of Christian Hebraists. The first complete Old Testament came from the Soncino Press in 1488. The third edition of that initial work, published at Brescia in 1494, was used by Luther in his German translation of the Old Testament.

Printing

Serious Bible study in the early fifteenth century was a daunting task due mainly to the nature and availability of literary resources. As manuscripts were only produced after many days of exacting toil, they were quite naturally very expensive. Although libraries were numerous, they were small by modern standards, usually containing no more than three hundred titles.² The

¹Such a view was supported by Nicolaus of Lyra. See Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation, pp. 63-64.

²The library of Christ Church Priory at Canterbury was reckoned to be one of the largest in all of Christendom in 1300, with but 2000 manuscripts.

volumes were normally written on parchment, in folio or quarto sheets, enclosed between heavy boards which were bound in leather. Needless to say, they were cumbersome to handle. Such valuable objects were often chained to a lectern or desk, and those on open shelves remained securely within the walls of the monastery, cathedral, or college which was fortunate enough to have them. Finally, a reading knowledge of Latin was essential if the great majority of manuscripts were to be understood, and only a small fraction of the population possessed such knowledge.

There were, of course, some advantages in a limited access to materials dealing with biblical or theological issues. Any debate, in written or verbal form, was in Latin, and thus confined to an intellectual elite. Apparent contradictions could be dealt with in a systematic way by means of the application of well tested rules of logic to the issues. This cosy system, however, was to be undone by an unknown German inventor.

When moveable metallic type, an oil based ink, and relatively inexpensive paper, were brought together by the platen of Gutenberg's printing press, a new world of books came into being. In his shop in Mainz, Johann Gutenberg (c. 1400-1468) first mastered the basic elements of typography in the early 1450's. Gutenberg had designed a mold with precisely stamped matrices which made it possible to cast uniform lead type in large quantities. If he had not made this breakthrough someone else would have done so. The skills, the materials, and the demand for the publication of books were all present in mid-fifteenth century Europe. With the rapid multiplication of

schools came a corresponding increase in literacy. Businessmen, especially bankers, found that the ability to read and write was a definite asset.

Following the publication of his beautiful 1,282 paged "Gutenberg Bible" in 1455, the printer's fame, if not his fortune, was assured. Mainz soon became the gathering place for apprentice printers, eager to learn the new trade. When the city was sacked by the troops of Adolf of Nassau in 1462, these men were forced to flee, spreading the printing industry all over Europe. The following year presses were stamping in Augsburg, Basel, Cologne, Strasbourg, and Ulm. By 1464 printing was established in Rome. Six years later Paris had a press, soon to be followed by Holland. In 1476 England too came of age.

Names which were to become famous in the world of publishing began to appear on colophons: Amerbach and Froben of Basel; Fro-schauer of Zurich; the Koberger family in Nuremberg; Hans Luft of Wittenberg; and Aldus Manutius of Venice. The demand for their products was most encouraging. In the early years of the sixteenth century the following appeal appeared in a letter from a Basel scholar to his friend:

At this very moment a whole wagon load of classics ...has arrived from Venice. Do you want any? If you do tell me at once, and send the money, for no sooner is such a freight unloaded than thirty buyers rise up for each volume, merely asking the price, and tearing one another's eyes out to get hold of them.¹

Not only did the newly rediscovered classics sell well, but tracts

¹Johannes Janssen, History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages, trans. M.A. Mitchell (London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1896), vol. 1, p. 19.

treatises, and books written by advocates of Church reform streamed from the presses in the second decade of the century. Among the most popular books printed in Germany at this time was Luther's German New Testament. The first edition of 5,000 copies, which appeared on 22 September, 1522, was sold out in less than three months. Hans Luft of Wittenberg produced 100,000 copies of the monumental work.

The contributions of the new print medium were inestimable to scholarship in general, and to biblical studies in particular. Books, although not inexpensive, were well within the means of the ever increasing middle class. Printing made for legibility and exactness. References to a specific edition and page allowed scholars to interact with one another on an international level. The work of exegesis was especially advanced by the publication of Bibles, commentaries, concordances, and various linguistic tools, compiled by the scholarly advocates of the "New Learning."

CHAPTER ONE

Exegesis in Transition, Colet and Erasmus

People say to me: 'How can scholarly knowledge facilitate the understanding of Holy Scripture?' My answer is: How does ignorance contribute to it?¹

-Erasmus

These two questions, and the first was as sincere as the second, indicate a basic difference in approach to biblical interpretation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. On the one side were those who were suspicious of the "New Learning" and especially of how it might be applied to theology and biblical studies. Some in this camp feared that somehow the use of Greek might infect the Church with the heretical views of the Greeks. Humanists were occasionally accused of heresy simply because of their knowledge of Greek.² Perhaps a more basic and pervasive source of misgiving was that an emphasis upon grammar, archaeology, historical and literary criticism,

¹Erasmus, De Libero Arbitrio, LB, vol. 9, col. 1219F, trans. E. Harbison, The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), pp. 96-97.

²See W. Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 93.

would disturb the sense of continuity in interpretation. Why rock the hermeneutical boat which had been so effectively stabilized by the Schoolmen? Why depart from a system which answered so many questions so well?

On the other side were those who, having tasted the fruits of the revival in learning, wanted to "see the Bible with our own eyes." They were no longer content to rest upon the work of the Ancient Fathers of the Church. They saw the dialectical method of the Schoolmen as an exegetical shroud which had to be ripped off the text and discarded if vitality was to return to the Church. In its place they wanted a simple, clear, and fresh approach to the Scriptures. The literal sense, though not necessarily the only sense, was to be the foundation for all the others. All facets of the "New Learning" were welcomed if they facilitated the discovery of the long neglected literal sense. In effect, the methods and insights of humanism's historical and literary criticism were to be brought to bear upon God's Holy Word.

Two men, John Colet (1467-1519),¹ and Desiderius Erasmus

¹Research on Colet's exegesis is somewhat scarce. The following authors have devoted some significant space to Colet as an exegete: J. Lupton, The Influence of Dean Colet upon the Reformation of the English Church (London: George Bell and Sons, 1893), pp. 10-27; L. Miles, John Colet and the Platonic Tradition (London: George & Unwin Ltd., 1962); R. McKeon, "Renaissance and Method in Philosophy," Studies in the History of Ideas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1918-35), vol. 3, pp. 43-49 and 94-95; S. Jayne, John Colet and Marsilio Ficino, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 26-28, 64; and D. Parsons, "John Colet's Stature as an Exegete," Anglican Theological Review, vol. 40, 1958, pp. 36-42.

(1469-1536),¹ were chiefly responsible for promoting this new exegetical approach in England. Colet, after taking his first degree at Oxford University, travelled and studied in France and Italy before returning to England in 1496. He immediately began a series of public lectures at Oxford on the Pauline Epistles, and remained in the University for eight years before his appointment as Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in 1504, a position he held for the remainder of his life. An educator at heart, the Dean founded the Cathedral's grammar school at his own expense. This institution is noteworthy in view of the fact that it was the first grammar school in England established expressly to promote the "New Learning."

Our knowledge of Colet's approach to exegesis comes from his published lectures on Romans and I Corinthians, an incomplete commentary on Romans, various theological treatises, and some letters

¹With the current popularity of Erasmian studies some recent works have been directed toward the humanist's exegetical writings, including: J.B. Payne, "Toward the Hermeneutics of Erasmus," Scrinium Erasmianum, ed. J. Coppens (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 13-49; by the same author, "Erasmus and Lefevre d'Etaples as Interpreters of Paul," Archiv, vol. 65, 1974, pp. 54-83; B. Hall, "Erasmus: Biblical Scholar and Reformer," Erasmus, ed. T. Dorey (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 81-114; L. Bouyer, "Erasmus in Relation to the Medieval Biblical Tradition," The Cambridge History of the Bible, ed. G. Lampe (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 492-505; A. Rabil Jr., Erasmus and the New Testament: The Mind of a Christian Humanist (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1972) pp. 37-134; J. Bentley, "Erasmus' Annotations in Novum Testamentum and the Textual Criticism of the Gospels," Archiv, vol. 67, 1976, pp. 33-53; R. Bainton, "The Paraphrases of Erasmus," Archiv, vol. 51, 1966, pp. 67-75; W. Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation (Cambridge: The University Press, 1955), pp. 92-166; E. Kohls, Die Theologie des Erasmus (Basel: Friedrich Verlag, 1966) pp. 126-140; H. Schlingensiepen, "Erasmus als Exeget auf Grund seiner Schriften zu Mattheus," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, vol. 48, 1929, pp. 16-57; H. de Lubac, Exegese medieval (Lyons: Arber, 1959-1964) vol. 4, pp. 427-84; D. Parsons, "John Colet's Stature as an Exegete," Anglican Theological Review, vol. 40, 19, pp. 36-42; J. Aldridge, The Hermeneutic of Erasmus (Zurich: EVZ-Verlag, 1966).

preserved by Erasmus and others.¹ To Colet goes the distinction of being the first man in sixteenth century England to re-emphasize the grammatico-historical approach in hermeneutics. Perhaps his greatest contribution came by way of the influence he held over the peripatetic humanist scholar Erasmus.

Erasmus, born out of wedlock, was educated by the Brethren of Common Life in Deventer and Bois-le-Duc. In 1486 he became an Augusti Canon in Steyn and was ordained by the Order in 1492. More suited for scholastic studies than the contemplative life, he began his university career in Paris in 1495. In 1499 he first visited England. There he found intellectual allies, and for the most part an appreciative audience. On his first visit Erasmus lived for a short time at St. Mary's College, Oxford. It was during this stay that he first met John Colet. "Here I first began to know the man," he wrote, "--for some god or other had sent me thither. . . I never knew a richer nature. He delighted in men of similar mind, though preferring to apply himself to things that prepare for a future life."²

It was not Colet alone who warmed Erasmus toward England. Writing to his English friend and former student Robert Fisher, Erasmus described his first impressions of intellectual life at Oxford:

¹Colet's works have been edited and translated by J.H. Lupton, who also provides many helpful introductions and notes. Lupton's translations will be followed. All citations will be taken from The Gregg International Reprint editions of 1966. The citation will include the author's name, an abbreviated title of the work, and the page number to the English translation. See Abbreviations.

²Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 1211, vol. 4, p. 507.

...You will ask me how I like England,...I never liked anything so much before.... I have met with so much civility, and so much learning...deep, accurate, Latin and Greek.... When I hear my Colet I seem to be listening to Plato himself. In Grocin¹ who does not marvel at such a perfect world of learning? What can be more accurate, profound, and delicate than the judgments of Linacre?² What has Nature ever created more gentle, more sweet, more happy than the genius of Thomas More? ...It is marvellous how general and abundant is the harvest of ancient learning in this country....³

Inspired by his first experiences in England, and having clarified his goals, Erasmus returned to France in January of 1500. He seems to have gone to the Low Countries with the strong desire to learn Greek. When he next set foot on English soil in 1505, he had mastered the language, and began to translate the New Testament. A year later, following a brief visit to Cambridge, Erasmus departed for Italy, where for the next three years he studied in that country's finest libraries.

Upon returning to England in 1509, Erasmus resided with the Thomas More household, and later with another friend, Andrew Ammonius. It was during this period that John Fisher, the Chancellor of Cambridge, was seeking to carry out humanistic reform in education there and sought the Dutch scholar for the faculty. In 1511 Erasmus was appointed lecturer in Greek, and in November of the same year

¹William Grocyn (c. 1446-1519), an English cleric, who studied Greek in Italy from 1488 to 1490. He returned to teach Greek at Oxford with a deep interest in humanism.

²Thomas Linacre (c. 1460-1524), after studies at Oxford, went to Italy where he studied medicine as well as Greek. He became Henry VIII's physician in 1509, and nine years later founded the Royal College of Physicians. He served as a tutor for Prince Arthur and Princess Mary.

³Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 118, vol. 1, pp. 273-74; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 226.

accepted the Chair of Divinity, and began to lecture on Jerome.

His work at Cambridge lasted but three years. He was to return to England for three further visits, but these were of short duration. His writings, some of which were translated into English, and his friends, both academic and political, were to continue the Erasmian influence in England for many years to come.

After some wandering in Europe. Erasmus came to rest in Basel, where he remained from 1521 until 1529. He then moved to Freiburg im Breisgau, where he lived until 1535, when he returned to Basel. It was in Basel that most of his works were published at the press of his close friend John Froben.

Colet and Erasmus were men of vision, intellect, and courage. Colet was the pioneer, the motivator. Erasmus was the popularizer, who fully grasped the potential power of the newly developed print medium. Both men were critical of the abuses which they saw in the Church, and though both were suspected of heresy, they remained within the orbit of Roman authority. These two men were transitional figures, bridging the gap between Medieval and modern exegesis.

I. The Doctrine of Scripture

Revelation

For both Colet and Erasmus God was the source of all truth, and He had chosen to reveal that truth to mankind. God had revealed Himself in nature, in the Scriptures, and most perfectly in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

This divine revelation was seen as being of the purest essence at its source, thus reflecting the neo-platonic contrast between unity and diversity. That which was nearest to God was unified, and simple. As things moved farther from God they became more diffused, diversified, and complex. Man, by means of responding to God's revealed truth was drawn from multiplicity and ignorance to the unity of pure and simple truth. "Light" was Colet's favorite illustration of this concept. He described God's revelation as a concentration of pure intense light streaming forth from a small aperture in a darkened room. The farther from the source one moved along that stream, the greater the diffusion of light. It was for man to follow the shaft of light [God's revelation] upwards to the purer unity of truth.

He wrote:

For these [the intense rays of light] streaming as it were from the Sun of Truth, gather and draw together towards themselves and toward unity those who are in a state of multiplicity, that they may have first light, and then warmth as its consequence.¹

For Erasmus the beams of divine truth were many in number, though all originating from one source. God's truth was to be

¹Colet, En. Cor., p. 57.

looked for in all things, secular and divine. "You may find things which are not opposed to the teachings of Christ in the books of Plato or Seneca; in the life of Socrates, you will find a degree of consistency with the life of Christ."¹ In his Enchiridion Militis Christiani, Erasmus argued that the best of ancient literature should be used to adorn the temple of the Lord.² More specifically he recommended:

Of the philosophers my mind is that thou follow them that were of Plato's sect, because both in the very many sentences, and much more in their style and manner of speaking, they come very nigh to the figure and property of speech used of the prophets and in the Gospels.³

As all truth was God's truth, it was to be sought after in the best of classical literature. Erasmus explained:

One should not scorn good advice, even that of a pagan author.... Literature molds and invigorates the young character and is an excellent preparation for understanding Holy Scripture, to come upon which with unwashed hands and feet is something like sacrilege.⁴

Such investigation was not to be done indiscriminately. For the young Christian, desirous of fighting the good fight, "...it will be of profit to sample all the various types of gentile learning. . . with caution and judgment. . . ; with the intent of merely passing over the country and not living there permanently."⁵

¹Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 210.

²Erasmus, Enchiridion, Holborn, p. 135.

³Erasmus, Enchiridion Militis Christiani, trans. not given, (London: Methuen and Co., 1905), p. 63. All English translations quoted in this study will be taken from this source and edition unless otherwise noted. The citation reference will include an abbreviated title of the work and the page number.

⁴Ibid., Holborn, pp. 31-32.

⁵Ibid., p. 63.

Scripture was for Erasmus the supreme source. Though Plato, Seneca, and Socrates may have possessed some elements of divine truth," . . . you will find in Christ alone the congruity and harmony of all things."¹ As the source of God's purest revelation, the Bible was not to be neglected. Erasmus grew impatient with Christian humanists who neglected Scripture in their quest for truth:

You admire Hadrian's statue, and the baths of Domitian; will you not welcome more readily the sacred Epistles of Peter and Paul? In the books of Sallust or Livy you are pleased with the ancient story...shall it not be still more delightful to learn in the books of the Apostles and Evangelists...? If you admire the tongue of Cicero...are you not still more delighted with the eloquence of Paul, to whom you owe your religion and salvation?²

Thus for the humanist Erasmus, the Christian was well advised to consult the best of profane literature in his search for God's truth. If nothing else, such an approach would better prepare one to understand the mysteries of the Scriptures. It is at precisely this point that we find Colet diverging from Erasmus on the issue of revelation.

For the Dean the issue of the singularity of God's written revelation was clear:

We ought to banquet with Christ alone, at the choice tables of Scriptures.... At other tables, even the books of heathen authors, in which there is nothing that savours of Christ, nothing that does not savour of the Devil, at those tables, I say, no Christian assuredly ought to sit, unless he chooses to be thought a guest of the Devil rather than the Lord.³

¹Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 210.

²Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 710, vol. 3, pp. 137-38.

³Colet, En. Cor., p. 110.

Not only did Colet disagree with the Erasmian idea that profane literature prepares and aids the Christian in interpreting the Bible, but for him, the effect of reading the ancient philosophers and poets was quite the reverse:¹

Now if any should say...that to read heathen authors is of assistance for the right understanding of Holy Writ, let them reflect whether the very fact of such reliance being placed on them, does not make them a chief obstacle to such understanding. For in so acting, you distrust your power of understanding the Scriptures by grace alone, and prayer, and by the help of Christ, and of faith; but think you can do so through the means and assistance of heathens...."2

One should note here that Colet is not including in this advice authors who provide a historical context in which to read the Scriptures. He cited Suetonius for such a purpose.³ His point is clarified in the pronouncement: "Do not become readers of philosophers, companions of devils. In the choice and well stored table of Scripture are all things contained that belong to the truth."⁴

The underlying factor which influenced this divergence between Colet and Erasmus was their respective views of man as the recipient of God's revelation. For Colet, the Fall of Man had devastating effects upon human intellect and will. Without God's grace no one could know the truth or will the good.

¹ See E. Rice Jr., "John Colet and the Annihilation of the Natural," Harvard Theological Review, vol. 45, July, 1952, pp. 141-163. Rice argues that due to Colet's view of man as totally dependent upon God's grace for the revelation of the truth (i.e. the Scriptures), Colet should not be classified as a humanist.

² Colet, En. Cor., p. 110.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

All that belongs absolutely and essentially to man (who is nothing if not weak, foolish, evil, vain, lost, and nought; whose power is weakness, his wisdom folly, his will malicious, his acting an undoing, his accomplishment destruction) all I say, that goes to make up man is condemned with one voice and one judgment of the Spirit throughout the entire Holy Scriptures of God.¹

Such depravity rendered man totally incapable of comprehending either God or His work without the aid of divine revelation. Colet wrote:

By no human resources, by no faculty of reason even in its highest vigour, by no spirit of the world, by no supports of human learning and eloquence, accumulate them in what manner and to what extent he pleases, is man enabled to soar to the designs of God, placed as they are far above all human reason and will.²

Real truth, argued Colet, ". . . is understood by grace; grace is procured by our prayers being heard; our prayers are heard when whetted by devotion and strengthened by fasting. To have recourse to other means [human reason] is mere infatuation."³ For Colet human reason became the opponent of grace: "Humanaratio inimica et adversaria est gratiae: legem suam constituentes legi Dei non sunt subjecti."⁴ The light of God's truth did not shine upon philosophers and poets. For insight into divine realities, there was but one guide: "These things are known to the Divine Spirit alone, and to those who are inspired by the same Spirit."⁵

Such a position set Colet apart not only from Erasmus, but from Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples as well, a contemporary whose exegetical views are often compared with the Dean's. Lefèvre spoke

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 26.

³Ibid.

⁴Colet, Opuscula, p. 263. Colet noted approvingly that Paul and Dionysius "...considered it an unworthy thing for human reason to be mixed up with divine Revelation. Nor would they have it thought that truth was believed through the persuasion of men rather than through the power of God." Colet, En. Cor., p. 171.

⁵Colet, En. Cor., p. 26.

of Aristotle and others as "pious philosophers", who did receive revelation from God: "And even though God who illumines all men had not yet appeared visibly in the world, nevertheless, He who is an unlimited and infinite light shining on every age shone down on them from heaven."¹ This position was strongly represented in the Florentine Humanists, and especially Marsilio Ficino, who saw philosophy and religion as "sisters."² Ficino, who kept a lamp burning in his study before the image of Plato, wrote: ". . . legitimate philosophy is nothing else than true religion, and legitimate religion is nothing else than true philosophy."³

How can we explain Colet's open antipathy to philosophy? The answer seems to lie in the fact that Colet was willing to abandon anything which he felt was in conflict with the literal sense of the New Testament--including his humanist inclinations. Paul is the ultimate source of the Dean's viewpoint. The Apostle's words regarding human philosophy were taken seriously:

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ...For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified....⁴

¹Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, "Dedicatory epistle to Germain de Ganay," Introductio in metaphysicorum libros Aristotelis (Paris: 1493) trans. E. Rice Jr. in his article "John Colet and the Annihilation of the Natural," Harvard Theological Review, vol. 45, July, 1952, p. 157.

²See P. Kristeller, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964) p. 332. A good analysis of Colet's departure from Ficino on this issue appears in L. Miles' John Colet and the Platonic Tradition (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962) pp. 1-17.

³Ibid. Kristeller.

⁴I Corinthians 1:20 and 22.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.¹

Accommodation

As a corollary to his doctrine of revelation, Colet postulated a theory of accommodation. God had accommodated his revelation to meet the needs of man's impaired intellect. "Theology," he noted, "which is the revelation of divine truth, and the language of the prophets, takes great count of human weakness."² Accordingly God. ". . . makes the heavenly and spiritual natures to degenerate in some measure, and brings them down to the lowly state of men, to be objects of their senses to some degree."³ In this way God, ". . . describes the condition of things divine. . . .by poetic fictions."⁴ These "poetic fictions" were God's attempt to reveal truth which in its purity would overwhelm man. God accommodated the Scriptures to the weakness of human understanding.

Such a view of accommodation was by no means new or unique. The Alexandrian School of interpretation promoted a very similar theory. Clement of Alexandria argued, "But in as far as it was possible for us to hear, burdened as we were with flesh, so did the prophets speak to us, as the Lord accommodated himself to human weakness for our salvation."⁵ In the same manner Origen, who Colet

¹ Colossians 2:8.

² Colet, Opera Dionysii, p. 7.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Clement of Alexandria, as quoted by F. Battles, "God was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity," Interpretation, vol. 31, 1977, p. 23.

leans upon in his exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis, wrote that God dealt with men as a parent does with a small child," . . . accommodating it [his message] to the small understanding. . . ."¹

"So the Word of God seems to have disposed the things which were written, adapting the suitable parts of his message to the capacity of his hearers and to their ultimate profit."²

Colet's theory of accommodation seems to be rooted in two presuppositions. The first is the mode of God's revelation. As described above, Colet saw God's pure truth as that which is so far above the perception of man that it must be adapted to his limited understanding. ". . . We may perceive him to have spoken, not in keeping with His own intelligence, but so as to suit the conceptions of the multitude. . . .," wrote Colet of Moses. The ancient Hebrew was in his understanding a fish who must be lured toward God, ". . . by the bait of a high and holy fiction. . . ."³ In a similar vein he wrote of Moses, "But like a good and devout poet, as Origen in his treatise against Celsus calls him, Moses would invent something, even in a certain degree unworthy of God, if only it might be of advantage and service to man."⁴

The second conditioning factor in Colet's theory is a distinct anti-Jewish bias. He described the "chosen people" as "homely and uncultured,"⁵ "ill-instructed people," and "simple-minded rustics."⁶

¹Origen, Contra Celsum 4:71, trans. R.P.C. Hanson, Allegory and Event (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959) p. 226.

²Ibid.

³Colet, Opuscula, p. 28.

⁴Ibid. p. 27.

⁵Ibid., p. 28.

⁶Ibid., p. 14.

In an apology to Radulphus, a friend to whom Colet wrote five letters dealing with the exposition of Genesis chapter one, he stated: "I would not have you think, I say, that I am always taking shelter in this [accommodation theory] , or forgetting that you are no Hebrew clodhopper¹ but a most accomplished philosopher."²

Perhaps the prime example of Colet's principle of accommodation at work comes with his treatment of the creation of the heavens and the earth:

...Moses never forgot his purpose in the opening scene and description of the universe: which was, while observing the order of events, to study at the same time the mental powers of an ill-instructed people. Whence it followed, that he touched upon no other parts of the universe, than those which are most ordinarily noticed by a race but low in the scale of humanity, and treated of those in such a way only, as he thought it adapted to their capacity.³

The Mosaic description of the days of creation can furnish another example of accommodation. "It is unworthy of God and utterly unbecoming, to suppose He made first one thing and then another. . . .",⁴ he began. His next words point to the motive behind Colet's rejection of the progressive creation program: ". . .As if He could not have made all things at once, in a single instant."⁵ To Colet's mind the primitive Hebrews could never have comprehended instantaneous creation, and so Moses invented a "high and holy fiction," to make God's work understandable. The support

¹lutulentum hebreum, i.e. muddy, dirty.

²Colet, Opuscula, p. 12.

³Ibid., p. 14.

⁴Ibid., p. 17.

⁵Ibid.

used to buttress Colet's construct of instantaneous creation came from but one reference, and that a rather cryptic citation from Ecclesiasticus: ". . .He that liveth forever created all things in general."¹

Erasmus, who held man's reasoning powers in much higher esteem than did Colet, formulated a similar though less well developed theory of accommodation. In his Enchiridion Militis Christiani, Erasmus described the means by which God revealed Himself to man:

...The Spirit of God hath a certain tongue or speech appropriate to himself, he hath figures, similitudes, parables, comparisons, proverbs, and riddles.... The wisdom of God stutthereth and lispeth as it were a diligent mother fashioning her words according to our infancy and feebleness. She stoopeth down and boweth herself to thy humility and lowliness.²

This theme of a mother accommodating speech to the needs of a child was borrowed from Origen.³ Interestingly, it was picked up by

¹Ibid., Ecclesiasticus 18:1.

²Erasmus, Enchiridion Militis Christiani, p. 67. In another place he writes: "Holy Scripture has its own language by which it adapts itself to our understanding. For in it we read that God is angry, grieved, indignant, furious.... Expressions such as these do not mean changes take place in the nature of God, but are rather modes of speech appropriate for our weakness and stupidity." LB, vol. 9, col. 1218AB, trans. J.B. Payne, "Towards the Hermeneutics of Erasmus," Scrinium Erasmianum, vol. 2, p. 40.

³In his Homilies on Jeremiah, Origen wrote: "When we talk to a child of two we talk baby-talk because he is a child, for as long as we maintain the character appropriate to an adult age, and speak to children without adapting ourselves to their speech, children cannot understand us. Now imagine a similar situation confronting God when he comes to deal with the human race.... Notice too how we who are adults change the names of things for children...not using the language of adults.... Do we suffer from arrested development when we do this? ...Or is it allowable for the sake of accommodation, when we are associating with a child not to talk the language of older and mature peoples, but to talk in a child's language?" trans., R.P.C. Hanson, Allegory and Event (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959) p. 227.

John Calvin who followed Erasmus.¹

Thus we see that Colet and Erasmus share a common view of revelation. Both see God in His grace accommodating the Scripture to the needs of fallen man. In this they seem to have drawn upon Neo-Platonism. Where they part company is on the matter of the singularity of God's revelation. Colet departs from Erasmus, humanism, and Florentine Neo-Platonism at this point in his attempt to be consistently Pauline.

The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture

For both Colet and Erasmus the authority of the Scripture was closely linked with its divine origin. The process whereby the revelation of God was communicated to the mind of the human author was superintended by the Holy Spirit. Such inspiration

¹Calvin repeats Origen's original theme, but his source is likely to be Erasmus in that he uses the Erasmian term "lisp": "For who ever of slight intelligence does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is want in such a measure to 'lisp' in speaking to us? Thus such forms of speaking do not so much express clearly what God is like [Calvin is speaking to the issue of anthropomorphisms] as accommodate the knowledge of him to our slight capacity. To do this he must descend far beneath his loftiness." The Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. F. Battles, edited for the Library of Christian Classics by J. McNeill (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1960), 1:3, 1, vol.1, p. 121.



did not however, at least in the theology of Erasmus, preclude human error.

In his paraphrase of II Peter 1:21, Erasmus makes a clear pronouncement of inspiration:

For the prophetes, whiche spake of things before hande, did not speake after their owne braine nor after the deuise [devise?] of their own mynde, but...the holy gost inspired their hartes, and using them as his instrumētes, he signified his mynde unto us by thē accordingly.¹

In his Enchiridion he reminded the reader that "If heaven and earth should perish, yet of the Words of God not one jot or tittle shall perish, but all shall be fulfilled."² Such inspiration was not confined to the prophetic texts alone. ". . . All holy scripture came by divine inspiration and from God the author."³ In his annotation on Matthew 24:40, Erasmus indicated that he felt the very tenses of the verbs had great theological importance.⁴

Colet acknowledged the Holy Spirit as ". . . the parent of the Holy Scriptures. . . ."⁵ In his exposition of I Corinthians 11, dealing with Paul's admonition about participation in heathen feasts, Colet reasoned:

From this passage we may draw the conclusion, that those who are consecrated to God in Christ, so as to banquet on Christ, ought to resort only to the table where Christ is served. Now this table, laid with manifold

¹ Erasmus, Paraphrases, II Peter 1:21.

² Erasmus, Enchiridion, p. 65.

³ Ibid., p. 59, see also Ecclesiastae, LB, vol. 5, col. 1047; and Paraphrases, II Timothy 3:14-17.

⁴ Erasmus, Annotations, LB, vol. 6, col. 127E-F.

⁵ Colet, Allen, vol. 5, p. 1291.

dishes and food of Christ, is Holy Scripture; in every part of which is the relish and solid food of life-giving Christ.¹

Though it would be anachronistic to speak in terms of "plenary inspiration," we do see in Colet the general inspiration of both Old and New Testaments. A similar note is struck by Erasmus. The Scripture ". . .has nothing irrelevant in it, not even a jot or tittle, nothing unworthy of close study or of being pondered, nothing incompatible with the question, 'What is this?'"²

Though holding to the inspiration of the Scripture, Erasmus never implied that the Bible was not a human book. Men, even though under the influence of the Holy Spirit, were subject to error, and did make mistakes in both testaments.³

¹Colet, En. Cor., p. 108. There has been some debate on the plenary nature of inspiration in Colet's writings. F. Seebohm has argued that, "...from the method adapted in his exposition of St. Paul's epistles, and the first chapter of Genesis, it is clear that he did not hold the theory of uniform verbal inspiration...." The Oxford Reformers of 1498 (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1867), p. 67. E. Hunt retorted that Seebohm's perspective of Colet on this issue has been distorted by his desire to see the Dean as a prototype of higher criticism; Dean Colet and His Theology (London: S.P.C.K., 1956), p. 101.

²Erasmus, Enchiridion Militis Christiani, trans. R. Himelick (Bloomington, Indiana: Midland Books, 1963) p. 46.

³A number of these "errors" are pointed out by Erasmus in his Annotations. Commenting on Matthew 27:9, he surmised that Matthew might have written Jeremiah instead of Zechariah. He explained this mistake as a mere "slip of memory," which had no bearing on the authority of Scripture; LB, vol. 6, cols. 139-40. A note on Matthew 2:6 discusses the fact that the Gospel reverses the prophecy of Micah 5:2. Erasmus noted that Jerome had suggested a number of explanations, all of which he felt were weak. He suggested that it was best to admit that Matthew made an error--not a lie--but a "slip of memory." Erasmus posited that the Spirit possibly misled Matthew purposefully for some unknown reason; LB, vol. 6, cols. 12E-14B. See also LB, vol. 6, cols. 151-53.

Erasmus doubted the historicity of many Old Testament accounts, and felt that certain portions of it were counterproductive to Christian morality unless understood allegorically. Allegory became an effective Erasmian tool for reconciling the content of various portions of the Old Testament with the presupposition that all the Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit. In his paraphrase of II Timothy 3:14-17 he explained:

There is no reason why we should esteeme the bokes of the Prophetes or Moses to be of none effecte after the gospel is published, yf through a spiritual understanding they be applyed unto Christ and unto godlynes. But al the whole scripture, that is set forth unto us not by mans wit but by inspiration of the holy gost, hath greate profyte....¹

Without seeing the Old Testament through allegorical glasses, Erasmus felt, one could be easily led astray. In writing to Capito he remarked, ". . .I wish that the Christian Church was not so dependent upon the Old Testament, which is almost preferred above Christian writings, in spite of the fact that it is full of shadows. . ."² The truth he did see there was often shrouded with "indecent, silly fables."³ As the controversy between Pfefferkorn and Reuchlin raged, Erasmus went so far as to write:

In my opinion, provided the New Testament remain intact, I would rather see the Old Testament abolished altogether, than to have the peace of Christendom destroyed because of the books of the Jews.⁴

¹ Erasmus, Paraphrases, II Timothy 3:14-17.

² Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 798, vol. 3, p. 252.

³ Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB., vol. 5, col. 870.

⁴ Erasmus, Apotheasis Reuchlini Capionis, LB. vol. 1, col. 700.

Erasmus understood many Old Testament accounts in terms of what later theologians would call "myth." The early chapters of Genesis were most certainly put in this category.

...We read that Adam was made from mud, that his little wife was unobtrusively drawn from his side while he slept, that the serpent tempted the little woman with forbidden fruit, that God walked in the cool of the evening, and that a guard was placed at the gates of Paradise to prevent the fugitives returning, would you not fancy the whole thing a fable from Homer's workshop?¹

He questioned the reality of Noah's Ark, and the exploits of Samson, concluding that such accounts could only be understood in terms of allegory.² Erasmus winced at the earthiness of the Old Testament narrative, writing: "When you read about Lot's incest, the whole narrative of Samson, David's adultery, how the senile king was cherished by a virgin, does that not seem to be repulsively obscene to chaste ears?"³

For Colet, the Old Testament, while being a rich source of spiritual food, was obscure, and in need of the New Testament to unlock its true nourishment. He wrote:

The Old Testament, as St. Paul explains in his Epistle to the Romans, was called a table by David, when he said 'Let their table be made a snare to them.' But the dishes are shut up and covered, and all is under seal as well.⁴

In contrast to the Old, the New Testament he saw as having

¹Erasmus, Adages, LB., vol. 2, col. 773, trans., P. Smith, Erasmus (London: Harper and Brothers, 1923), p. 169.

²Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB., vol. 5, col. 29.

³Erasmus, Adages, LB., vol. 2, col. 773.

⁴Colet, En. Cor., p. 109.

...the covers laid aside, and the feast of truth set open and displayed, and we are invited to partake of it. It is opened by the President of the banquet, who, through his servant Moses furnished his table sumptuously at first with covered dishes.... He also it was who afterwards removed the covers....¹

The choice things of God, concluded Colet, were to be found in the New Testament, ". . .wherein the water of Moses has been turned into the wine of Christ himself."²

Unlike Erasmus, Colet seems to have taken the Old Testament narrative in a real literal sense. In speaking of various types and symbolic acts in the Old Testament, he made it quite clear that these were not merely mythical in nature, but were rooted ". . .in the persons of actual living men, and in their actions with one another"³ Colet was far more sparing in his use of allegory than Erasmus.

Among the books of the Bible, Erasmus saw a gradation of importance. Isaiah was superior to Esther, for example.⁴ Paul's letters to the Churches at Corinth and Rome were weightier than the Epistle to the Hebrews. Such a differentiation, explained Erasmus, was the natural consequence of human authorship. Since God did not dictate to the writers of Scripture, their individual talents and intellectual capacities are reflected in their works. He asked:

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Colet, Opera Dionysii, p. 7.

⁴Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 211.

Why did John write more excellently than other evangelists? ...The reason for this is no doubt that the revered Spirit does not meet with the same erudition in all. For He increases what we have produced by our own industry, he improves our studies, he inspires our endeavours.¹

Thus, we see that both Colet and Erasmus posited a high degree of divine superintendence over the authors of the Bible.

The authority of the Scriptures was firmly based upon the fact of inspiration by the Holy Spirit. They agreed further that the Old Testament was unclear, and in need of the New Testament in order to be properly interpreted. Colet was unwilling however to go as far as Erasmus in doubting the historical veracity of the Old Testament narrative. He did postulate that the first chapter of Genesis was indeed accommodated to the primitive Hebrew mentality, and therefore the interpreter had to exercise great care in handling the literal sense. Due to his view of the essential historical truthfulness of the Old Testament, Colet was drawn toward typology and symbolic exegesis, while Erasmus was free to formulate allegorical interpretations. This difference of approach is clearly seen in their respective views of the senses of Scripture.

¹Ibid.

II. Interpretation and the Senses of Scripture

We turn our attention now to the question of the proper interpretation of that which God has revealed in Scripture. As we shall see, Colet and Erasmus posited both divine and human aspects to this process. Clearly both men believed in divine illumination--the deeper understanding of God's true meaning in a given text. A tension developed between them however, over the issue of the human understanding of the various senses of Scripture and of which sense is primary.

Illumination

As well as accommodating His revelation to the needs of mankind, God, in His grace, aided individuals in comprehending the Scriptures through an internal illumination of the Spirit. In his paraphrase of II Peter 1:21, Erasmus explained: "The thing [that] is set forth by the inspiration of the holy ghost, requireth an interprete inspired with the lyke spirite."¹ Such divine help in understanding was contingent upon spiritual cleanliness. "Thou shalt perceive that thou art inspired of God, moved inwardly, rapt, and in an unspeakable manner altered. . . if you come to the Scriptures with a clean heart," wrote Erasmus.²

¹Erasmus, Paraphrases of the New Testament, translators, Nicholas Udall (vol.1), and Miles Coverdale (vol. 2), (London: 1548-1549), no pagination. All future references to this work will be designated as Paraphrases, followed by the biblical reference.

²Erasmus, Enchiridion, p. 65.

In much the same spirit Colet argued that "Truths of the intelligible world," the "naked reasons of things," are illumined only to those ". . . of the very highest spiritual power, those who are wholly concentrated on the One, and who, despising the body and the world, stand unshaken on the loftiest mental pinnacle, on the one, indivisible centre."¹ Divine understanding streams down ". . . from the Soul of souls, even God. . . , making every sense true."² Such "light" ". . . as far excells the light of reason as certainty does uncertainty, or as the solar light does colours. . . .," allowing man to know heavenly truth ". . . without uncertainty or doubt."³ Such an illumination furnished a ". . . gentle, agreeable and clear intelligence of things."⁴

We see here that for Colet and Erasmus the most basic prerequisite for accurate interpretation of Scripture is the internal witness of the Spirit of God. The Bible, written for the salvation and edification of Christians, could never be truly understood by those who came to it with mere intellectual curiosity. Moreover the Christian reader could only experience "illumination" if he prepared himself spiritually and possessed a "clean heart."

¹Colet, En. Cor., p. 181.

²Colet, En. Rom., p. 192.

³Ibid., Eugene Rice traces Colet's doctrine of illumination to Florentine Neo-Platonism, and especially to Pico della Mirandola; see "John Colet and the Annihilation of the Natural," Harvard Theological Review, vol. 45, July, 1952, p. 160.

⁴Colet, En. Rom., p. 165.

On the matter of the scriptural senses, both Colet and Erasmus recognized the standard fourfold division, yet were hesitant to endorse it. In speaking of Old Testament exegesis, Colet defined the senses as follows:

The literal is when the actions of the men of old time are related. When you think of an image, even of the Christian Church which the Law foreshadows, then you catch the allegorical sense. When you are raised aloft, so as from the shadows to conceive of the reality which both represent, then there dawns upon you the anagogic sense. And when from signs you observe the instruction of individual men, then all has a moral tone for you.¹

The literal sense

It is significant that when Colet began the only extant piece of Old Testament exegesis we have from his pen, he wrote: "I am not ignorant that there are several senses; but I will briefly follow out only one of them."² The sense he "followed out" was the literal-historical sense which he saw as accommodated to the mentality of the ancient Hebrew recipients.

It could be argued that Colet's exegesis of the creation narrative would better be called "analogical" or "metaphorical" rather than "allegorical." There were not two different levels of meaning, one literal, another spiritual. The Holy Spirit did not "hide" an inner truth in the crude letter. Rather, the truth was too advanced for the primitive Hebrew mentality, and analogies and metaphors were

¹Colet, Sac., p. 106.

²Colet, "Letters to Radulphus," Opuscula, p. 4.

called for by way of accommodation. Thus God's creative act of separating light from darkness was a metaphor or parable of the divine act of separating existence from non-existence.¹ The ancient Hebrew could not have conceived of non-existence, but the absence of light was a crude approximation of the concept. "In speaking of the evening and the morning, he [Moses] is continuing the analogy: so that you must refer the evening to matter, the morning to form."² Colet never attempts to draw an anagogic meaning from the text of Genesis chapter one. The sense is literal, albeit an accommodated literalness. The New Testament, with the exception of parabolic and apocalyptic portions, ". . . has the sense that appears on the surface; nor is one thing said and another meant, but the very thing is meant which is said; and the sense is wholly literal."³

Erasmus felt it significant that the Fathers only recognized two senses: the "grammatical" (literal-historical), and the "spiritual."⁴ The "spiritual" sense was called "tropological," "allegorical," and "anagogical," without any distinction between them.⁵ This looseness of definition appealed to Erasmus and he was not always consistent in his use of these terms.

In Colet's mind the question was not that of the validity of the four senses. The crucial issue was the central importance of the literal sense. He stressed that ". . . where the literal sense is,

¹Colet, Opuscula, p. 6.

²Ibid., pp. 6-7.

³Colet, Sac., p. 106.

⁴Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB, vol. 5, col. 1034E.

⁵Ibid.

there the allegorical sense is not always along with it; but, on the other hand, that, where the allegorical sense is, the literal sense is always underlying it."¹ Colet's general rule of interpretation was: "...the very thing is meant which is said; and the sense is wholly literal."²

Though Erasmus agreed that the literal sense was foundational, it was not to be the chief goal of the exegete. The "literal" sense he identified with the flesh, the "spiritual" sense with the spirit. J.B. Payne argues convincingly that this principle of the contrast between flesh and spirit is at the heart of Erasmian hermeneutics. The correct interpretation of Scripture requires both a literal (flesh) and a spiritual (spirit) understanding. The latter contains both objective and subjective elements. Objectively, it recognizes an allegory or trope contained within the literal sense. Subjectively, it draws from the allegory or trope a spiritual truth which is applicable to the Christian life.³ There was no question in his mind which of the two levels was the more important. In his Enchiridion Erasmus maintained that by seeking always to progress from the visible things of Scripture to the invisible, one maintains perfect piety.⁴ The letter could be neutral or imperfect, while the spiritual aspects of God's revelation appealed to the higher aspects of man.⁵

¹Colet, Sac., p. 107.

²Ibid., p. 106.

³Payne, "Toward the Hermeneutics of Erasmus," Scrinium Erasmianum, ed. J. Coppens, vol. 2, pp. 13-49; see especially pp. 17-23.

⁴Erasmus, Enchiridion, LB, vol. 5, col. 27.

⁵Ibid.

The literal sense was an outward shell which must be cracked open to reveal the secrets inside. Erasmus saw "manna" as an illustration of the relationship between the spiritual and literal senses. In that it was small it ". . .signified the humility, lowliness, or homeliness of the style. . ." ¹ of the literal sense. "That it was somewhat hard. . .betokeneth secret mysteries hid in the literal sense." ² Once one penetrates to the inner mystery, ". . .nothing is sweeter nor more full of pleasure and sweet juice." ³ This "sweet juice" had to be sought after. Due to ". . .the strange manner of phrase, and oftentimes the troublous speaking of divers crooked figures and tropes. . .we must labour right sore before we can perceive them." ⁴

Often mention is made in Scripture of wells, fountains and rivers, which signify . . .that we ought to enquire and search diligently for the mysteries hid in the Scripture. What signifieth water hid in the veins of the earth but mystery covered or hid in the literal sense? What meaneth the same conveyed abroad but mystery opened and expounded? ⁵

Erasmus advised the Bible student: "Of the interpreters, choose them above all other that go farthest from the letter. . . ." ⁶ This admonition must be seen in the same light as Jacques Lefevre's railings against the abuse of the literal sense. ⁷ What both men reacted against was a sterile, mechanical

¹ Erasmus, Enchiridion, p. 59.

² Ibid., p. 60.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

⁶ Ibid., p. 66.

⁷ See H.A. Oberman, Forerunners of the Reformation (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967), pp. 281-307.

use of the text. Erasmus spoke of clerics who were ". . .so cold, so slacked, so faint as so to vanish away, but that they continue all their life and wax old in the letter and never . . .come to the spiritual knowledge of Scripture. . . ." ¹ He denounced the practice of those who prayed as though there was value in many words, ". . .which is chiefly the vice of them which (as infants) cleave to the literal sense, and are not yet grown to the ripeness of the spirit." ² "The recording of one verse," he urged, "shall be more savoury in thy mouth. . .if thou break the cod and taste the sweetness which is therein. . .than saying the whole psalter. . . understood only after the literal sense. . . ." ³

All this is not to say that Erasmus denigrated the importance of the literal sense. He recognized that the spiritual meaning was based upon the "letter." He warned:

As those who exclude tropes and allegories from the Scripture verge on Judaism... so those who reject the simple sense when it is not necessary, undermine the foundations of Scripture. ⁴

The differing emphases of Colet and Erasmus on the relative importance of the various senses were brought into sharp contrast in a friendly debate on the issue of Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. ⁵ Erasmus assumed the traditional position that Christ's

¹ Ibid., p. 68.

² Ibid., p. 58.

³ Ibid., p. 67.

⁴ Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB, vol. 5, col. 1038E-F.

⁵ This debate was published by Erasmus under the title Disputatiuncula, (Antwerp: Th. Martins, 1503); see LB, vol. 5, cols. 1265-1294.

suffering was motivated by His human nature shrinking back from the lonely and painful cross ahead.¹ Colet, using Jerome for support, held that the actual cause of the agony was the Saviour's concern for the Jewish nation in light of the judgment which was soon to fall upon it.² His objection to the Erasmian view was that if the martyrs throughout history have cheerfully died in their love for Christ, how could one think that He, the essence of love, would for one moment hesitate for fear of His physical death? After considering Colet's argument at length, Erasmus, though disagreeing, allowed for the possibility that both positions might be correct. He wrote:

Nothing forbids our drawing various meanings out of the wonderful riches of the sacred text, so as to render the same passage in more than one way. I know that, according to Job, 'the Word of God is manifold.'³

To such a line of argument Colet took exception:

I cannot assent to your statement--an erroneous one, I think, though you have many to keep you company in it--that the Holy Scriptures, from their prolific nature give birth to many senses.... Not that I should be unwilling to grant that they can be very prolific, and I especially admire their exuberant fertility and fullness; but I think that it is the essence

¹ Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 108, vol. 1, pp. 245-46.

² Ibid.

³ Erasmus, Disputatiuncula, LB, vol. 5, col. 1267A. This seems to echo Augustine, who had no qualms about multiple interpretations: Assuredly the Holy Spirit "...foresaw that this interpretation would occur to the reader, nay made provision that it should occur to him, seeing that it is founded on truth. For what more liberal and more fruitful provision could God have made in regard to the Sacred Scriptures than that the same words might be understood in several senses...?" De Doctrina Christiana, Book 3, Chapter 27, trans. J. Shaw (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1873) p. 103.

of fertility that it should bring forth not a number of things, but some one thing, and that the truest.¹

To illustrate his point, Colet turned to nature. He pointed out that the lower forms of animal life have numerous offspring, while the more advanced species have few. He then concluded: "The Holy Spirit, who is the parent of the Holy Scriptures, and who is fertility itself, as by his own power he brings forth one and the same simple truth, must of necessity produce for us by his own truthful words, only one sense and that the truest."²

This difference of approach is perhaps the most significant contrast between Colet and Erasmus. One sees here the divergence of two hermeneutical paths used by English biblical scholars. Colet, with his emphasis on the singularity of interpretation based upon the literal sense, is followed in turn by Tyndale and the Anglican reformers in general.³ The Erasmian turn, putting more importance on the spiritual interpretation, yet basing that on the literal

¹Ibid. Colet's emphasis on the singular nature of Scripture was influential in the hermeneutics of Martin Bucer who apparently read the Disputatiuncula. In a letter to the "Senators of Strassburg," written in April of 1527, Bucer used Colet as a source in his rejection of allegory. See, "Prudentia aequitate, et pietate spectabilibus uiris, Senatoribus, inclytæ urbis Argentoratensis Martinus Bucerus, Gratiam & pacem a Deo patre & Domino nostro Jesu Christo," Bodleian Library, fol. A9-A10; see Constantin Hopf, Martin Bucer and the English Reformation (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), pp. 51-53.

²Ibid., p. 1291D.

³I do not wish to imply any direct influence of Colet upon the later English Reformers, but merely a similarity of approach. Colet anticipated the path of the Continental Reformers, who in turn influenced Tyndale et al.

sense, was of necessity committed to a theory of multiple interpretations. This form of exegesis is seen most clearly among the scholars of the Counter Reformation in England and elsewhere.

Allegory

Though Colet allowed for allegorical interpretation--if it was based on the literal sense--he employed it infrequently. He did cite Philo¹ and Origen² as authorities on Genesis chapter one, but his commentary and lectures on the Pauline letters are virtually free of allegory.³ The same cannot be said of Erasmus.

Erasmus' affection for allegorical interpretation was based upon two presuppositions. The first of these was the theory that allegory was a key means to be employed in all literary criticism. This is forcefully put forward in his Enchiridion: "All manner of learning [includes] . . . a plain sense and a mystery, even as though they were made of a body and soul, [so] that the literal sense should be little regarded; thou shouldest look chiefly to the mystery."⁴ This was true of poets and philosophers;

But most of all, holy scripture, which being in a manner like to Silenus or Alcibiades, under a rude and foolish covering, includes pure, divine and godly things.⁵

After drawing the allegorical moral out of numerous Homeric legends, Erasmus added:

¹ Colet, Opuscula, pp. 4, 22.

² Ibid., pp. xxvii, 11, 95.

³ The one clear exception to this statement is Colet's interpretation of "the stone of stumbling." Ibid., p. 53, note.

⁴ Erasmus, Enchiridion, p. 145.

⁵ Ibid.

If the labours of Hercules putteth thee in remembrance that heaven must be obtained with honest labours and enforcements indefatigable: learnest thou not that thing in the fable which the philosophers teach and also divines...? But if [without allegory] thou shalt read of the infants wrestling in their mother's belly, the inheritance of the elder brother sold for a mess of pottage, the blessing of the father prevented and taken away by fraud, Goly smitted with the sling of David, and the hair of Samson shaven: it is not of so great value as if thou shouldest read the feigning of some poet.¹

The second attraction of allegorical exegesis for Erasmus was its capacity to reconcile the baseness of the Old Testament with the pure and sublime truths of the Gospel.² Based upon these two factors, allegory became a central element of Erasmian exegesis. Its emphasis is seen not only in the early Enchiridion as many commentators point out, but in Ecclesiastae--the most systematic Erasmian writing on hermeneutics, and published in 1535--one finds forty-one columns devoted to allegorical exegesis.³

Erasmus was explicit as to the purposes of allegory. In line with Augustine, he felt that allegories should not be used to prove a doctrine of the Church.⁴ Allegory could and should be used, however, in confirming and illustrating a doctrine.⁵ Other purposes of allegory include: 1) The veiling of God's mysteries from the eyes of unbelievers;⁶ 2) Drawing men by degrees to complete

¹Ibid., pp. 146-47.

²See pp. 18-19.

³Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LR, vol. 5, cols. 1010-1051.

⁴Ibid., col. 1045.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., col. 1047.

knowledge;¹ 3) Fixing divine truth in the mind through imagery;² and 4) Exercising the mind of good Christians, since man is fascinated by the mysterious.³

As to method, Erasmus outlined several steps to be followed in doing allegorical exegesis. The first was a general warning against extravagances of the imagination, and an admonition to follow three famous guides:

But in opening of mysteries thou mayst not follow the conjectures of thine own mind, but the rule must be known and a certain craft, which one Dionisius teacheth in a book entitled De divinis nominibus, that is to say, of the names of God; and Saint Augustine in a certain work called Doctrina Christiana, that is to say, the doctrine of a christian man. The apostle Paul after Christ, opened certain fountains of allegory, whom Origen followed, and in that part of divinity obtained doubtless the chief room and mastery.⁴

It was Augustine whom Erasmus followed most consistently in his allegorical method. The basic rule for both scholars was that allegory was to be used only when the literal sense is absurd, or of little or no use to the Christian life.⁵ Such was the case when Erasmus looked at the narrative of Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden. The central importance of such a story was its allegorical lesson:

...By deceptive promises, Satan tempts the inferior desires of man so that he pulls back from God's commandment. Reason is drawn along by the lusts of the flesh to agree with the crime. Eve, having been

¹ Ibid.

² Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 259.

³ Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB, vol. 5, col. 1047.

⁴ Erasmus, Enchiridion, pp. 147-48.

⁵ Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, pp. 277-78; see Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, Book 3, Chapter 10.

persuaded eats. Adam is not conquered by the persuasion of the serpent, but rather by an excessive love for his wife. The flesh is our Eve; the spirit or reason, our Adam. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.¹

An allegory was never to be forced. "The reader should be warned that in this matter Origen, Ambrose, and Hilary frequently sin, and there are others who freely imitate Origen and remove the grammatical sense out of a zeal for forcing allegory, when there is no need to do so."² In general however, the testimony of a godly Father of the Church was considered strong support for a given spiritualized interpretation. With questionable logic Erasmus argued:

If it is unclear that the Holy Spirit intended what the interpreter of an allegory finds, neither is it clear that such an interpretation was not intended. On the contrary it is more credible that the Holy Spirit intended it, provided the interpretation is consistent with sound faith and with the rest of Scripture. It is the characteristic of a pious mind to believe that a holy doctor has received what he interprets from above.³

Like Augustine, Erasmus urged that for proper interpretation of the more mysterious portions of the Bible, the exegete had to be well schooled in many disciplines, including: rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, music, nature, and geography.⁴

¹Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB, vol. 5, col. 1043F.

²Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 280, trans. Rabil, Erasmus and the New Testament, p. 112.

³Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB, vol. 5, col. 1047A.

⁴Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, pp. 184 ff. These are all clearly found in Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana, Book 2, Chapters: 16, 28, 29, 31, 35, and 37.

Erasmus advised simplicity in the formulation of allegories. He was critical of complicated exegesis on the grounds that authors often misconstrue the literal sense, the idiom, or tropes.¹ The basic safeguard against such allegorical excesses was the rule that the grammatico-historical sense of the passage had to be the foundation upon which any spiritual sense was built.² There was to be no conflict between the two senses.³ We see here the most essential difference between medieval allegory and Erasmian allegory. Erasmus's approach to the Scriptures was never that of a literalist. Context and argument were of crucial importance to him. Allegory was only to be employed when the literal text was not, in his opinion, edifying.

As discussed above⁴ Erasmus put great confidence in divine illumination. This was of utmost importance when it came to the use of allegory. In his paraphrase of II Peter 1:21 he wrote, "The thing [that] is set forth by the inspiration of the holy gost, requireth an interpretoire inspired with the lyke spirite."⁵ The tools of literary and grammatical criticism would not complete the task of sound allegorical interpretation. "Purged emotions"⁶ and "purity of mind"⁷ were essential prerequisites. Erasmus hinted that a special capacity to interpret allegorically was given to certain individuals

¹Erasmus, Annotations, LB, vol. 6, cols. 71F-72F; and col. 184 D-E.

²Erasmus, Ecclesiastae, LB, vol. 5, col. 1019.

³Ibid., 1027.

⁴See page 58.

⁵Erasmus, Paraphrases, II Peter 1:21.

⁶Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 179.

⁷Erasmus, Enchiridion, LB, vol. 5, col. 88.

in the form of a "spiritual gift." In discussing I Corinthians 13 he wrote: ". . .If I haue also a more excellent gyft. . .for example, the gyft of prophecie, whereby I know all the secrete senses of the scriptures of God. . .and lacke charitie in vayne haue I all the other. . . ." ¹

Typology and Symbolism

As stated above, Colet's exegesis was rarely allegorical. He did however often interpret in a typological sense, which he saw as a sub-type of the literal sense. The "types" ² he found in the Old Testament were distinct from Erasmus' allegories in that they were rooted in real historic people and events. Colet did not share his friend's concept of Old Testament "myth." These typological foreshadowings were based upon ". . .actual living men, and in their actions with one another, so that first there may exist a sort of stage, and rude show, and indistinct representation, albeit not of the absolute truth itself, yet still some figure of it that is to be." ³ An example of this typological interpretation is found in Colet's treatment of the first mention of bloody sacrifice in Scripture:

When righteous Abel, whom Cain in his envy
slew, offered of the firstling of his flock,
what else did that dutiful shepherd mean to signify,
than this, namely, that there would be a shepherd
of God's sheep, even Jesus, to offer Himself as a
firstling and as a sheep without blemish to God, for

¹Erasmus, Paraphrases, I Corinthians 13:1.

²Colet used the phrases: "a figure that is to be," and "a foreshadowing," Opera Dionysii, p. 7.

³Colet, Opera Dionysii, p. 7.

those that are ordained to salvation? To that offering God had respect--regarded it with favourable eyes--by reason of what was signified by it.¹

An interesting feature of Colet's typological interpretation is the fact that in many cases he saw the Old Testament figure as having spiritual insight into the future meaning of his actions or words. "When Adam was cast down into misery," Colet argued in his comments on Romans chapter five, "he learnt in spirit that he should one day regain his happiness through Jesus Christ. It was of this he prophesied, when he said: "a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife--that is, to his bride the Church."²

Noah had a similar insight into the significance of the sacrifice he offered following the flood. It is interesting to note here that Colet saw in Noah's actions a figure, not only of Christ's death, but of the spilled blood of Christian martyrs as well.

He stated:

The meaning of which act could be none other than this: namely, that he meditated profoundly on Jesus, crucified along with His crucified ones--that is, the holy and spotless martyrs, who died as burnt-offerings to God. . .he commemorated, as in a picture, the eventful sacrifice, thus to happen in the future.³

¹Colet, Opuscula, p. 120.

²Ibid., p. 119. In De Sacramentis Ecclesiae, Colet refers to Adam as the "primus propheta" who had special spiritual insight into the saving work of Christ in the future. Nam caro Adam significat spiritum Christi, he wrote (Sac. p. 54). Adam knew that his fleshly life was a foreshadowing of the coming Messiah. Thus his prophecy regarding a man leaving his father and mother and cleaving to his wife, was a picture of Christ leaving his Father and joining with the Church: Adam divinum Filium, Eva ecclesiam significat: matrimonium inter Adam et Evam, matrimonium sanctum inter Dei Filium et ecclesiam, in fecunditatem justitiae, quae proles est Dei et ecclesiae. (Sac. p. 64).

³Ibid., p. 120.

In the same way Colet felt that Abraham, ". . . saw by the clear spirit in the boundless future the means of salvation, even Jesus Christ: and it was that which he rehearsed by figures, as in a play. In offering up his son, he called to mind the fact that the Son of God would have to be offered up."¹

Colet even went as far as to say, "All who are esteemed righteous before God believed with the mind in Christ, whom they looked forward to, before thus proceeding to any work in the flesh."² This knowledge of the Messiah was ". . . shown them by revelation. . . ."³ The motive behind their typological acts was to make ". . . Christ present to themselves, so to speak for their own consolation, by shadows and similitude. By sacrifices, as in a play, they endeavored as well as they could, under the divine prompting, to represent what Christ would do in the real sacrifice of himself."⁴

Turning now to Colet's use of symbols, we should remember that for purposes of this investigation, a symbol is a real event, or historical personage, from which or whom is derived a moral lesson. In a most fascinating comparison, Colet saw great significance in the Jewish rite of circumcision:

In my opinion what is really typified is the circumcision of the mind and spirit of man itself [sic] ; for this too is clogged with a covering of a foreskin. By this I mean carnal affection, gross imagination, and loose unbridled reason. While covered and enfolded by these, the mind can have no

¹Ibid., p. 122.

²Ibid., p. 122.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

union with God, and therefore it must have these wrappings removed, and be wholly bare, and stand forth in singleness, even as God is single. There must be cut off from it, and cast away, all fleshly-mindedness, all unchastened imagination, in a word, all lax unrestrained reasoning; that so the mind may be inwardly free and unencumbered, and may unite full readily with God; and conceiving seed by him, may bring forth the plentiful fruit of righteousness.¹

In somewhat less colorful terms, Colet saw the whole of Abraham's pilgrimage in symbolic terms. It was for the Christian in every age to ". . . be led out from his country and kindred, and to hasten towards the land pointed out to him by God. . . ." ² Each believer is to ". . . ascend the mount of holiness; to build an altar there, and there call upon God. . . . Let him pray and hope for offspring of righteousness." ³

We see that in the matter of the senses of Scripture, a subtle but important divergence took place in the hermeneutics of Colet and Erasmus. Erasmus, drawn to the Platonic division of flesh and spirit, applied that two-fold model to the interpretation of Scripture. The literal sense, which he saw as corresponding to the flesh, although important, was not of the highest value or priority. It was the spiritual truth contained within the "letter" which furnished true divine nourishment. Thus, allegorical and anagogical interpretation became the mainstays of Erasmian exegesis.

Colet, holding that the essence of divine inspiration was singularity of meaning, was unwilling to allow for multiple interpretations. His practice was to develop sub-groupings under the general literal sense: typological, symbolical, parabolic, etc.

¹Ibid., p. 84.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

III. Grammatico-Historical Exegesis

In speaking of "grammatico-historical" exegesis, we are defining a hermeneutical approach to the text of Scripture which seeks to discover the author's intent in his original writing, by using all available facilities for grammatical analysis. An attempt is made to put a given passage in its proper contextual framework and historical milieu.

There is much evidence to support the conclusion that such an approach to biblical interpretation was indeed rare in Medieval England. It is true that there were some individuals in Europe who were attempting grammatico-historical exegesis, but they were few and far between. Roger Bacon (d. 1292),¹ Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1340),² and the English Franciscans, did encourage the study of learned languages, and championed literal interpretation, but they were swimming against the tide. Bacon complained that,

...in the study of theology itself, holy scripture is too much neglected, and that philosophical wranglings prevail. The expounding of holy scripture consists almost solely in making divisions, solving apparent contradictions, and drawing parallels.... The reading of holy scripture itself is of small account, compared to the study of Peter Lombard's Sentences.³

Above all, the study of languages is neglected, with fatal consequences to theology, which is of necessity founded on writings in foreign languages.³

¹In Bacon's Opus Maius he devoted chapters to: languages, interpretation, and the relation of maths, geography, and astronomy to biblical studies.

²Roger Bacon, Opus Maius, as quoted by M. Deanesly, The Lollard Bible (Cambridge: The University Press, 1966), p. 163.

³Ibid., pp. 165-66.

Lyra reported that at the University of Paris the literal sense of the scriptures was obscured in the fourteenth century,

...through the manner of exposition traditionally handed down from others: for, though these men said many good things, nevertheless they have touched little on the literal sense, and have multiplied the mystical senses to such a degree, that the literal sense has been entangled among so many expositions, and partly suffocated. Thus they have so much subdivided the text, and read into it so many meanings, that they almost bewilder the understanding and memory.¹

The state of biblical study in late fifteenth century England seems to fit this Medieval pattern. Erasmus recorded that "... nothing was taught at Cambridge but Alexander, the Parva Logicalia, as they were called, those old 'dictates' of Aristotle, and questions from Scotus."² William Tyndale, who knew Oxford as an undergraduate in the early years of the sixteenth century stated:

In the Universities they have ordained that no man shall look upon the Scriptures until he has been noselled in heathen learning eight or nine years, and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the Scripture.³

When men were exposed to such an education, he lamented, they "...dispute all their lives about words and vain opinions. . ."⁴

With such a dismal hermeneutical tradition, there is little wonder why John Colet caused such a stir at Oxford when in 1496 he returned from a sojourn in France and Italy and began to lecture on Paul's epistles. These public lectures, which continued for eight

¹ Nicholas of Lyra, Postillae perpetuae in Universam S. Scripturam, (Antwerp: 1634), not paginated. Cited and translated by M. Deanesly, The Lollard Bible (Cambridge: The University Press, 1966), pp. 166-67.

² Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 456, vol. 2, p. 328; Nichols, vol. 2, p. 331.

³ William Tyndale, The Practice of the Prelates, P.S. ed. by Henry Walter (Cambridge: The University Press, 1849), vol. 2. p. 291.

⁴ Ibid.

years, were dramatic in their departure from convention. Erasmus, who heard Colet in October of 1499 reported:

There he publicly and without reward lectured on St. Paul's Epistles. Here I first began to know the man--for some god or other had sent me thither.¹

Though he had never obtained nor sought for any degree in divinity, yet there was no doctor there, either of Divinity or Law, but came to hear him, and brought his text-books with him as well.²

That which moved the Oxford scholars as well as the young humanist Erasmus, was the grammatico-historical approach employed by Colet. "How can I express to you," Erasmus wrote to his new friend, "how much I have been touched and charmed with that style of yours. . . open, simple, full of modesty. . .?"³ As Erasmus noted, Colet's lectures sought to bring forth the simple, open, unencumbered intent of the Apostle's letters. In the words of Colet's chief translator and biographer, J.H. Lupton:

...To Colet first, more than to any other Englishman after the revival of letters, we owe the introduction ... of pure, scriptural teaching, in the days when Professors of Divinity still lectured on Duns Scotus, and when Luther and Tyndale were still boys at school.⁴

¹Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 1211, vol. 4, p. 507.

²Erasmus, The Lives of Jehan Vitrier and John Colet, trans. J.H. Lupton (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883) p. 23. That such enthusiasm in attending public lectures was unusual for the University faculty is attested in a letter from Erasmus to Colet: "...I do not know which most deserves praise, the modesty of those who being themselves authorized teachers, do not shrink from appearing as hearers of one much their junior, and not furnished with any doctor's degree, or the singular erudition, eloquence, and integrity of the man they have thought worthy of this honour." Allen, epis. no. 108, vol. 1, p. 247; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 221.

³Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 107, vol. 1, p. 245, Nichols, vol. I, pp. 208.

⁴J.H. Lupton, ed., En. Rom., p. xiv. See also A. Duhamel, "The Oxford Lectures of John Colet," Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. 4, 1953, pp. 493-510.

J. W. H. Atkins refers to Colet as ". . . the central figure in English intellectual life (c. 1500). His exposition marked a new era in literary interpretation. . . . Indeed it is not too much to say that with the work of Colet, and subsequently of Erasmus, in this particular field, a new epoch in literary appreciation was inaugurated. They were in fact the first to make use of the historical method of interpretation, in advance of their own and many later generations."¹

Although there is a divergence of opinion as to the extent to which Colet influenced Erasmus,² it is clear that the humanist was enamoured with Colet the man, and with his approach to biblical studies. Following their initial meeting in October of 1499, the two men were in almost daily contact for about three months. During that time a series of theological discussions was held. The effect of these friendly arguments was marked. "Colet showed him [Erasmus] the possibilities of a career devoted to Christian scholarship and excited him enough to make him ponder what such a career would involve."³

¹ Although his final remark is a gross oversimplification, Atkins is correct to emphasise the pioneering approach used by Colet and Erasmus. J.W.H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance (London: Methuen and Company Limited, 1947) p. 57. See also E.H. Harbison, The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1956) p. 57 f.

² Later scholarship sees Colet's influence on Erasmus in terms of demonstrating how the literary and historical criticism of humanism could be wedded with Christianity. See E.H. Harbison, The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1956): "...It was Colet more than any other human being who was the source of Erasmus' vision and sense of calling." p. 70; J. Huizinga, Erasmus of Rotterdam (New York: Harper and Row, 1952); and M. Phillips, Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance (London: The English Universities Press Ltd., 1964). In an older work, Frederic Seebohm, The Oxford Reformers of 1498 (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1867), denies decisive influence. Colet's role is seen in terms of merely turning Erasmus away from scholastic theology.

³ E.H. Harbison, The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1956) p. 73.

In a letter to Colet, Erasmus declined the invitation, indeed, admonition, of his friend to begin lecturing at Oxford on the Old Testament. It was clear however, that the time with Colet had changed him. Erasmus conceded:

...When I am conscious of the needful strength, I will put myself at your side, and will make an earnest, if not successful, effort in defense of Theology. Meantime nothing could be more delightful to me than to discuss daily between ourselves, either by word of mouth or by letter, some subject of sacred literature.¹

A deep and lasting friendship had begun, a relationship based upon mutual admiration and a common love for "good letters."

Erasmus related to his friend:

Your England is delightful to me most of all because it abounds in that which pleases me more than anything else, I mean in men most proficient in good letters, among whom... I reckon you the chief.²

Both Colet and Erasmus were well read in the best of ancient literature. "When I hear my Colet I seem to be listening to Plato himself," recorded Erasmus.³

Grammatical exegesis

It was quite natural that with such literary backgrounds both men would emphasise the importance of "grammar" in exegesis. For these two scholars, being equipped in grammar meant being schooled in dialectic, arithmetic, music, natural science, history, rhetoric, and ancient languages.⁴ The "grammarian" needed such a background

¹Erasmus, Allen, epis. no 108, vol. 1, p. 249, Nichols, vol. 1, p. 223.

²Ibid., epis. no. 107, vol. 1, p. 245, Nichols, vol. 1, pp.207-8.

³Ibid., epis. no. 118, vol. 1, pp. 273-74, Nichols, vol. 1, p.226.

⁴Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 184. See Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, Book 2: Chapter 31 (dialectics); Chapter 38 (Arithmetic); Chapter 29, (Natural Science); Chapter 28, (History); Chapters 32-34, and 37, (Rhetoric and Logic).

to be able to interpret scriptural figures, metaphors, similes, parables, hyperbole, and synecdoches.¹ Only when so prepared, was one ready to do exegesis. The great theological pillars of the Ancient Church were grammarians, asserted Erasmus: "Indeed it cannot be denied that Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, these men on whom our theological system mainly rests, belong to the class of grammarians."²

To those who argued that a "grammatical approach" to biblical interpretation in some way denigrated the work of the Holy Spirit as the illuminator of the Scriptures, Erasmus quipped:

If they reply that Theology is too great to be confined by the laws of grammar, and that all this work of interpretation depends upon the influence of the Holy Spirit, it is truly a new dignity for divines, if they are the only people who are privileged to speak incorrectly.³

What did Jerome mean, he asked, in saying, "It is one thing to be a prophet, and another to be an interpreter; in the one case the Spirit foretells future events, in the other, sentences are understood by erudition and a command of the language."⁴ Such a position was unavoidable for Erasmus in view of the misinterpretation which had plagued the Church for a millennium. He queried, ". . . If it was possible for the interpreters of the Old Testament to make some mistakes, especially in matters not affecting the faith. Why may it not be the same for the New. . .?"⁵ Continuing this line of argument he reasoned:

¹Ibid., p.259.

²Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 456, vol. 2, p. 321.

³Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 182, vol. 1, p. 410.

⁴Ibid., pp. 382-83.

⁵Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 182, vol. 1, p. 410, Nichols, vol. 1, p. 383.

Again, shall we ascribe to the Holy Spirit the errors which we ourselves make? Suppose the interpreters translated rightly, still what has been rightly translated may be perverted. Jerome amended, but what he amended is now again corrupted; unless it can be asserted that there is now less presumption among the half-learned, or more skill in language. . . .¹

To the opinion that the Fathers unfolded the Scripture as far as was necessary for the Church, he retorted: "I had rather see with my own eyes than with those of others, and. . .as much as they have said, they have left much to be said by posterity."²

Grammar was the servant of theology. It was not to be feared. Erasmus made it clear that he did not assume,

...that theology, the very queen of all disciplines will think it beneath her dignity if her handmaiden, grammar, offers her help and required service. For even if grammar is somewhat lower in dignity than other disciplines, there is no other more necessary. She busies herself with very small questions, without which no one progresses to the large. She argues about trifles which lead to serious matters.³

Though Colet was not nearly as erudite in grammar as Erasmus, both men agreed that the basis for any grammatical understanding was a mastery of the biblical languages. Colet never developed a working knowledge of Greek, much less Hebrew, yet he repeatedly emphasised their importance. In his first letter to Radulphus, the Dean reflected upon the difficulties of interpreting Genesis chapter one, unless the exegete was ". . .versed in the Hebrew tongue, and [had] . . .the means of consulting Hebrew commentaries." Without such help, he suspected ". . .that the Mosaic records can be

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 384.

³Erasmus, "Letter to Christopher Fisher," Allen, epis. no. 182, vol. 1, pp. 406-12; Nichols, vol. 1, pp. 380-85.

understood by no one."¹ As for New Testament exegesis, Colet's letter to Erasmus, reflecting upon the latter's Novum Instrumentum, published in 1516, makes clear his love for Greek:

For my own part I am so devoted to your studies and so charmed with your new edition, that it produces in me a variety of emotions. At the one moment I am full of sorrow that I have not learned Greek, without which we are nothing, at another I rejoice in the light which is emitted by the rays of your genius.²

At the conclusion of his letter Colet reiterated his estimation of the value of Greek:

If you will let me do so, I shall put myself at your side, and show myself your disciple by learning Greek, though I am almost an old man; remembering that Cato learned Greek when old, and observing that you, who match me in age, are now studying Hebrew.³

Although it is not clear precisely when Erasmus caught the vision for the value of Greek in biblical exegesis,⁴ we do know that by March of 1500 he had begun this life-long task. At that time he wrote: "My Greek studies are almost too much for my courage; while I have not the means of purchasing books, or the help of a teacher. And while I am in all this trouble, I have scarcely the wherewithal to sustain life; so much is our learning worth to us."⁵

¹Colet, Opuscula, pp. 3-4.

²Colet, Allen, epis. no. 423, vol. 2, pp. 257-58, Nichols, vol. 2, p. 287.

³Ibid.

⁴A Rabil Jr., Erasmus and the New Testament: The Mind of A Christian Humanist, argues that Erasmus' first visit to England in 1499 was a crucial turning point in his biblical studies. Colet is seen as his inspiration for a new type of interpretation. From More, Grocyn, and Linacre, he gained insight into the need for Greek, p. 46. Such a view is discounted by W. Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation, who finds no evidence that Erasmus, when in England in 1499, fully comprehended the significance of Greek for theological studies.

⁵Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 123, vol. 1, p. 285, Nichols, vol. 1, p. 233.

His correspondence over the next five years affords an inspiring glimpse of his intellectual tenacity. The following month he shared, "I have been applying my whole mind to the study of Greek, and as soon as I receive any money, I shall first buy Greek authors, and afterwards some clothes."¹ By the end of the year his intense desire for Greek had not slackened, ". . .How my heart burns to . . .attain some moderate capacity in Greek. I should then devote myself entirely to the study of Sacred Literature, as for some time I have longed to do."²

In March of 1501 Erasmus wrote:

It may be asked why I am so pleased . . .as to be learning Greek at my age. . . .As it is, I am determined that it is better to learn late than to be without the knowledge which it is of the utmost importance to possess.³

By the summer of that year a letter to Nicholas Benserad contained the following plea: "If there is any fresh Greek to be bought, I had rather pawn my coat than not get it; especially if it is something Christian, as the Psalms in Greek or the Gospels."

His efforts beginning to pay dividends, in September of 1502 he boasted of being able to read and write in Greek with proficiency.⁵ By the following year Erasmus related to Colet his satisfaction in taking up the study of Greek: ". . .For about three years I have

¹Ibid., p. 236, p. 287.

²Ibid., pp. 313-14.

³Ibid., epis. no. 149, vol. 1, p. 352; Nichols, vol. 1, pp. 313-14.

⁴Ibid., epis. no. 160, vol. 1, p. 368; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 334.

⁵Ibid., epis. no. 172, vol. 1, p. 381; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 353.

been entirely taken up with the study of that language [Greek] and I think I have not altogether thrown my labour away."¹ "I have learned by this experience," he wrote in another letter of the same period, "that without Greek one can do nothing in any branch of study; for it is one thing to conjecture and quite another thing to judge--one thing to see with other people's eyes, and quite another thing to believe what you see with your own."²

Although commencing a study of Hebrew, Erasmus did not develop any real proficiency in the language. Put off to some degree by the strangeness of Semitic pronunciation, and feeling that his mind could not learn another foreign language at his advanced age, Erasmus had neither the desire nor the strength to master Hebrew.³ In his exegesis of the Old Testament he almost wholly ignored the Hebrew text and relied instead on the Septuagint.

Erasmus had little patience for those who did not share his conviction that Greek was of utmost importance in doing exegesis. In a letter dated March, 1505, he wrote:

...They have neither sense nor shame, who presume to write upon the sacred books, or indeed upon any of the books of the ancients, without being tolerably furnished in both literatures [Greek and Hebrew], for it may well happen that while they take the greatest pains to display their learning, they become a laughing stock to those who have any skill in languages, and all their turmoil is reduced to nothing by the production of a Greek word.⁴

¹Ibid., epis. no. 181, vol. 1, p. 401; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 376.

²Ibid., epis. no. 181, vol. 1, p. 406; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 378.

³Ibid., epis. no. 181, vol. 1, p. 401; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 376; see also Allen, vol. II, p. 77 and vol. III, p. 96.

⁴Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 182, vol. 1, p. 412; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 384.

In a similar vein, he wrote:

I see it as madness to touch with the littlest finger that principal part of theology which treats of divine mysteries, without being instructed in Greek, when those who have translated the sacred books have in their scrupulous interpretation so rendered Greek phrases that even the primary meaning that our theologians call 'literal' cannot be understood by those who do not know Greek.¹

Latin alone was an inadequate tool. "Latin erudition," he wrote, "however opulent, is crippled and imperfect without Greek. We have in Latin at best some small streams and torpid pools, while Greek has the purest springs, and rivers flowing with gold."² In reference to the interpretation of Psalm 51 he asked:

Who could understand the sentence in the Psalm 'Et peccatum meum contra me est semper' unless he had read the Greek? This runs as follows, καὶ ἡ ἀμαρτία μου ἐνώπιόν μου ἐστὶ διαπαντός. At this point some theologian will spin a long story on how the flesh is perpetually in conflict with the spirit, having been misled by the double meaning of the preposition; that is, 'contra,' when the word 'ἐνώπιον' refers not to 'conflict' but to 'position,' as if you were to say 'opposite,' that is, 'in sight': so that the prophet's meaning was that his fault was so hateful to him that the memory of it never left him but floated always before his mind as if it were present.³

Erasmus was practical enough to realize that a perfect knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was not always possible. He opted for a basic knowledge of the languages including the abilities to use the various lexical tools available.⁴

The "terms" of the text are obviously the "nuts and bolts" of

¹Ibid., epis. no. 149, vol. 1, p. 352; Nichols, vol. 1, p. 313.

²Ibid.

³Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 288, vol. 1, p. 352.

⁴Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, pp. 181-84.

exegesis. Both Colet and Erasmus paid special attention to "key words." They used the best resources available in comparing, contrasting, noting the grammatical relationships of words, and in discovering their etymological distinctiveness.

Colet noted that Paul's use of words was distinct from that of other New Testament writers. "St. Paul has his own peculiar way of speaking, and employs words in such senses that one has need to be practised in reading him, to understand his meaning clearly."¹ An illustration of Paul's "peculiar way of speaking," is seen in Colet's analysis of the Apostle's use of "faith" in Romans 3. He begins with a general etymology:

In Latin writers the word faith (fides) properly means 'an abiding by, and true fulfillment of, our promises and agreements, so called because what is said is done (fiat).

To give faith (dare fidem) means to give a solemn promise. The word is also used at times in those writers for a belief in that which is not seen. And in this sense it is adopted by our divines.

We note here that Colet began with the then common use of "faith," which he used as a vehicle to explain a more subtle shade of meaning. Having laid this basic foundation, he turned to the Pauline uses of the term:

Thus St. Paul wrote to Timothy, a man of good faith, keep that which is committed to thy trust. Elsewhere he writes: I have kept the faith. To have faith is to believe. To receive faith is to be believed.... I trust (fido) means I have faith, I place my hope, I believe; while I distrust (diffido) means I abandon my belief, I despair.²

¹Colet, Opuscula, pp. 111-12.

²Ibid., p. 92.

Colet was aware of the hazards of "exegetical tunnel vision," or interpreting a "part" without seeing it in the context of the "whole." In commenting on Romans 6:9 he wrote:

In this passage St. Paul seems to have an under meaning, that it is by the death of Christ alone that men's sins can be blotted out; and that for such men as have laid aside their sins, if they again relapse into them, there is no hope of healing.... But all St. Paul's sayings must be cautiously examined, before any opinion touching his meaning be given.¹

That such an "under meaning" was not the Apostle's intent was evident, Colet reasoned, because of instances like that of I Corinthians 5:5, in which Paul advised that a fornicator be "delivered up to Satan," and then be "recalled" to the Church.² This holistic view of the text was in profound contrast to most Medieval--especially Scholastic--exegesis.

Neither man skipped over grammatical minutiae. Erasmus was always on the lookout for verbal "trifles which lead to serious matters." In his annotation on John 1:1 he argued against the "heresy of certain ones" [Paul of Samosata?] who denied that Christ was that verbum which was with God. Erasmus noted that the definite article made it quite clear that the text was not dealing with "just any word," but rather a specific, definite, and unique λόγος, Jesus.³ In similar fashion, when commenting on Romans 5:7, ("For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. . . ."), he interpreted the verse in light of the gender of the principal words:

¹Colet, En. Rom., p. 14.

²Ibid.

³Erasmus, LB, vol. 6, cols. 336E-337C.

In this passage 'righteous' and 'good' do not refer to a person, but rather to a thing, namely righteousness and goodness; they are neuter in gender, not masculine....¹

Colet, although limited to Latin in his analysis, discussed Paul's phrase ". . .the Law entered, that sin might abound" (Romans: 5:20). He noted that the conjunction "that," ut in this place, as often elsewhere in Holy Scripture, is used not so much to denote cause, as consequence."¹

Both men were interested in the histories of key words, and how the terms would have been understood by their authors and original readers.² In a discussion of Romans 2:27, "And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?", Colet went to great lengths to explore the etymology of the term "transgress" (prevaricator):

Now varicate, or prevaricate, is a term derived from the large, swollen, distorted varicose veins, that some people have upon their legs. Since the cure of these is hazardous, physicians are wont to trans-gress them, that is, pass them by. And hence it comes that to prevaricate means to transgress. Jurists use the word in another sense; applying the name prevaricator to one who is first on one side, and then on the other, and who aids an opponent's case by betraying his own....³ But in the present passage, by transgressor (prevaricator) is meant any one who deviates and wanders away from the prescribed limits of his duty ... and prevarication is neither more nor less than transgression of duty.⁴

¹Erasmus, Annotations, LB, vol. 6, col. 584D.

²Colet, Opuscula, p. 161.

³Although Colet claimed in one instance that "...an interpreter of Scripture is not called upon to play the part of a grammarian, or examine words overminutely....", Opuscula, p. 81, he does quite often explain the meaning of a crucial word or phrase.

⁴Colet, Opuscula, pp. 81-82. The source of Colet's etymological information was Nicolaus Perottus' Cornvcoptiae sev Latinae Lingvae Commentarii (Basle: 1526), pp. 789-790.

Erasmus' Annotations to the text of the New Testament repeatedly explicate words. When Paul wrote that men ". . . became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21) explained Erasmus, the term διαλογισμοῖς did not refer to simply thinking, but rather thought which employed logic, weighed alternatives, and then rendered a judgment.¹ In another place, the Apostle's phrase "the deadness of Sarah's womb," needed clarification. Erasmus wrote: "The term vulva does not refer to the female sexual organ, as is the common understanding, but the womb in which the fetus is conceived."² He amplified Romans 12:1, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice. . . .," by noting that "Something is 'presented' when it was previously promised and is now being offered, or when it was hidden and is now revealed, as a promissory note would be presented."³

An advantage of grammatico-historical exegesis was that it aided the interpreter in avoiding excessive literalism. Touching upon Christ's provocative statement: "This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34), Erasmus noted that the Vulgate used generatio haec. His Latin translation read aetas haec, reflecting the Greek more accurately, noting that γενεά could mean nation, people, age, time or period.⁴

¹ Erasmus, Annotations, LB, vol. 6, col. 564E.

² Ibid., col. 581E.

³ Ibid., col. 628 C-D.

⁴ Ibid., col. 126F.

Historical context

Turning now to the historical aspect of exegesis, we find that Colet and Erasmus were keenly aware of its importance. Historical background gave insight into a writer's motive, argument, and choice of terminology. Colet cited Suetonius¹ in describing Emperor Claudius as:

...a man of changeable disposition, and bad principles, and sudden purposes; a man too who, as Suetonius writes in his Life, banished the Jews from Rome, as they were in constant insurrection at the instigation of CHRESTUS.... St. Paul understanding... that the Roman Emperor, as Suetonius also relates, was bringing some 'new and unheard of taxes', originated by Caligula....²

Paul, having this knowledge of conditions in Rome, wrote to the Church there "...lest the brethren at Rome should chance to become weary of their vexations."³

Colet did his best to place the writing of Romans chronologically and historically:

This Epistle to the Romans was written during the reign of Claudius, at the close of his reign, about the twentieth year of St. Paul's ministry. At which time also, as I gather from the histories and from the letters of St. Paul himself, both Epistles to the Corinthians were written, as well as that to the Galatians: but this one to the Romans after them, not long before St. Paul's last journey to Jerusalem. For he was imprisoned by Festus, the Governor of Judea, four or five years after the despatch of these letters, and sent by him to Rome. This was the twenty-fifth year after the death of Christ, and after St. Paul's commission, and the

¹ Suetonius was a Roman historian and secretary to Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 117-138), his major work was The Lives of the Twelve Caesars.

² Colet, En. Rom., pp. 95-96.

³ Ibid., pp. 94-95.

second year of the reign of Nero. ... He [Paul] perished in the first persecution of the Christians that continued under Nero. . . , in the fourteenth year of Nero's reign.¹

Colet often supplied historical links which helped to explain a given passage. In commenting upon Paul's emphasis in I Corinthians on the shallowness of human wisdom, Colet wrote:

The Corinthians, accounted both wise in their own opinion and in that of others, supposed that there could be no topic of discourse, about which they could not dispute most subtly, and deliver a plausible decision.¹

Putting the Corinthians in a broader cultural context, Colet added that the Greeks were,

...an intellectual race, with leisure and literature, confiding at the same time in an elaborate kind of rhetoric, they had no scruple at pleading on either side. In these subtleties of the versatile human intellect, the Greek nation was ever adroit. . . , but was woefully deluded by such vagaries of the mind. For, in fact, the very faculty by which the Greeks thought they could best see and discern the truth, was the one by which they were most blinded, so as not to perceive it.²

In another place Colet gave background to Paul's words concerning the proper mode of feminine head-dress:

...It would seem to be his wish, by this formal reasoning to put down and suppress what he had especially noted in Corinthian women, namely, the pride they took in their heads of hair. He would induce them to muffle up their heads so as not to display their tresses; a matter in which the female mind is readily disposed to vanity.³

¹Colet, En. Cor., pp. 125-26.

²Colet, En. Cor., pp. 125-26.

³Ibid., pp. 112-13.

The writings of Erasmus, especially his Annotations and Paraphrases, show this same concern for a passage's historical setting. "One comes nearer to understanding the sense of Scripture," he wrote, "if he notes not only the situation and what is said, but also by whom it is said, to whom it was said, the words that are spoken, what time, what occasion, what preceded, and what follows."¹ Whether this emphasis is traceable to Colet is impossible to determine positively, but it seems most likely.

In this key area of grammatico-historical method, Colet has been shown to have made the breakthrough in sixteenth century England. Erasmus, inspired by Colet, set to work enhancing and popularizing the approach in biblical studies. Grammar and history, indeed all aspects of the "New Learning" were to be welcomed as the servants of theology. The words of Scripture were examined contextually and minutely. The biblical languages therefore took on a new importance. A new era had begun.

¹ Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, p. 196. Erasmus often referred to the sensus historicus (LB vol. 5, cols. 231D, 1029C, 1030E, 1034E) or the historia (LB vol. 5, cols. 125B, 744E, 1036 EF) of a passage. See Peter G. Bietenholz, History and Biography in the Work of Erasmus of Rotterdam (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1966), especially pages 46-50.

IV. Use of Authorities

In evaluating an exegete's use of authorities, two primary questions should be asked. First, which writers were selected and why? Secondly, how were these commentators put to use?

The ancient Fathers

Although Colet and Erasmus differed as to their particular favourites, in general terms they were in agreement in their choice and use of authorities. They went most often to the Fathers of the Ancient Church, and tended to disparage the moderns, especially the Scholastics. Erasmus wrote of Colet that he "...roamed with great zest through literature of every kind; finding most pleasure in the early writers, Dionysius, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Jerome. . . ."¹ The Dean's extant writings are well peppered with citations and quotations from these pillars of early Christian exegesis, yet one looks in vain for a Scholastic authority. Erasmus invited his readers to:

... compare these ancient theologians, Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, and Jerome, with these more recent ones. One will see a certain golden river flowing in the former, certain shallow streams echoing back, and these neither very pure nor flowing from their own source. The ancients thunder out oracles of eternal truth; in the moderns you have little fabrications of men whose examples vanish through insomnia the more closely you examine them. The ancients move you in a straight course toward the door of evangelical truth; the moderns struggle among the prolixity of human questions.... The ancients, on the basis of the solid foundation of Scripture, raise a strong edifice into the heavens; the moderns,

¹ Erasmus, The Lives of Jehan Vitrier and John Colet, trans. J.H. Lupton (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883), pp. 21-22.

by foolish arguments of men or even by flatteries not less foolish than monstrous, are raised to infinity by a high superstructure. The ancients will satisfactorily carry you into the happiest gardens, in which you will be both delighted and satisfied; while the moderns will tear you to pieces and torment you among thorny hedges. The ancients have all the fullness of the majesty, and the moderns no splendor at all, saying many sordid things and few worthy of the dignity of theology....¹

Among the ancients, Augustine was by far the most dominant influence on Colet's exegesis. Lupton noted that, ". . .with the exception of the supposed Dionysius, on whom he wrote a special commentary, Colet cites Augustine more frequently than any other Father. . . ."² The great Latin Father's influence is to be seen clearly in Colet's letters on Genesis chapter one. In the Confessions of Saint Augustine, books eleven, twelve, and thirteen are an exposition of the creation narrative. It is very likely that Colet made use of this source. The Dean's view that the opening verses are an epitome of the whole creation,³ is noted by Augustine as a good possibility, although not the one he preferred.⁴ The

¹Erasmus, Ratio, Holborn, pp. 189-90, trans. A. Rabil Jr., Erasmus and the New Testament, p. 104.

²J.H. Lupton ed., Opuscula, p. xlvi. Yet in commenting upon Colet's favorite authorities, Erasmus stated: "I should add that, among the old authors, there was none to whom he was more unfavourable than Augustine." Erasmus, The Lives of Jehan Vitrier and John Colet, trans. J.H. Lupton (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883) p. 22. This statement has been seriously questioned on the grounds that when Erasmus wrote his biographical work on Colet [1521], he was quite hostile to Augustinian theology. For a discussion of this matter see J.H. Lupton, ed., Opuscula, pp. xlv-xlvii; and Albert Hyma, "Erasmus and the Oxford Reformers," Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis, vol. 25, 1932, pp. 97f.

³Colet, Opuscula, p. 4.

⁴Augustine, The Confessions, 12:17, ed. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1876) pp. 333-34. All further references to this work will come from this edition, unless otherwise noted.

Augustinian theory that there was no time before creation¹ is picked up by Colet.² In De Genesi Contra Manichaeos Augustine interpreted "waters" in Genesis 1:2,6,7, as being symbolic of primal matter, and to be distinguished from the "waters" of Genesis 1:9, where the term was used in the normal sense of the word.³ "Waters" was used in this dual sense, noted Augustine, in accommodating the truth of creation to the Hebrews.⁴ Both the interpretation and the explanation were incorporated by Colet.⁵ In his exposition of Romans 3, Colet defined "faith" using an Augustinian etymology.⁶ He then noted: "St. Augustine wrote that faith was the virtue whereby we believe the things that are not seen."⁷ Colet quoted Augustine by name more than any other author, in matters relating to exegesis.

Erasmus, in his more mature years, tended to move away from Augustine toward a greater dependence upon Jerome and Origen.⁸

¹Ibid., Book 11, Chapter 18, pp. 304-05.

²Colet, Opuscula, p. 12.

³Augustine, "De Genesi Contra Manichaeos" 1:7:12,18 in Opera Omnia, vol. 1 (Paris: 1836) pp. 1053 and 1055.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Colet, Opuscula, pp. 10-11.

⁶Ibid., p. 92; see Augustine, "Sermo 49", Chapter 2, Opera Omnia, (Paris: 1865), vol. 5, Part 1, p. 321.

⁷Ibid., p. 93.

⁸Erasmus admitted preferring Augustine to Jerome as a youth, but later changed his mind. See Allen, vol. 3, pp. 337, lines 263-65. An extensive work has been done on the influence of Origen upon the theology of Erasmus, by Gerard J. Fokke, Christus Verae Pacis Auctor et Unicus Scopus. Erasmus and Origen, an unpublished Ph.D. thesis for the Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1977. The main emphasis is christological, yet some space is dedicated to Erasmus's allegorical method of exegesis. Unfortunately, the author confines himself primarily to two quite early works of Erasmus, The Enchiridion and the Disputatiuncula, and neglects the Annotations and Ecclesiastae which reflect the mature Erasmus. See especially pp. 156-179.

In a letter to John Eck in 1518 he claimed to have learned more from one page of Origen than from ten pages of Augustine.¹ He dubbed Origen, "the most skilful in theological matters."² Erasmus' affection for Jerome has been well documented.³

In his Enchiridion Militis Christiani Erasmus admonished, "Of the interpreters of scripture, choose. . .above all. . .Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine."⁴ This may suggest a descending order of approval from the humanist's perspective. A. Rabil Jr. has done a comparative study of the use of authorities in the various editions of Erasmus' Annotations.⁵ The original edition of 1516 showed a strong dependence upon the Latin writers, with Jerome referred to most often, followed in turn by Origen, Ambrosiaster, and Augustine. Three years later, Origen was primary and Augustine had surpassed Jerome.⁶ In the 1527 edition there were a large number of additional notes added, almost all of which came from Greek authors. In the final edition of 1535 there were almost an equal number of Greek and Latin citations.⁷ When Rabil's tabulations from the Annotations are compared with the publication dates of the Erasmian editions of the

¹Ibid., lines 252-54.

²Ibid., vol. 5, p. 7, lines 106-08.

³Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 210-11.

⁴Erasmus, Enchiridion, p. 66.

⁵A. Rabil, Jr., Erasmus and the New Testament, pp. 115-118.

⁶Ibid., p. 117.

⁷Ibid., p. 118.

Fathers, an unmistakable correlation is seen. In 1516, when Jerome's Opera Omnia was published, the Annotations of that same year reflected the works of Jerome most strongly. The Latin Fathers dominated the Annotations during the years Erasmus published the works of Cyprian (1519); Hilary (1523); and Ambrose (1526). The swing to the frequency of Eastern Fathers' citations was anticipated by the Erasmian editions of Irenaeus (1526); Chrysostom (1530); Basil (1532); and Origen (1536).¹

Colet occasionally cited Origen and Philo, especially in his Letters to Radulphus. The Dean's view of accommodation in Genesis chapter one was borrowed from Origen. Colet wrote: ". . . Like a good and devout poet, as Origen in his treatise against Celsus calls him, Moses would invent something, even in a certain degree unworthy of God, if only it might be of advantage and service to man."² Philo's view that it was folly to take the days of creation as literal days was picked up by the Dean, as well as the reason why the creation of plants was mentioned before the stars.³

Colet occasionally looked to Origen for light on the interpretation of Romans as well. In explaining the privileged position of the Jews in Romans 3, he wrote:

They were the first with whom God spake at sundry times and in divers manners, and to whom also were intrusted and committed the oracles of God: and by this is meant (as Origen would have it), not only the literal law, but also the spiritual interpretations, derived from Moses through a succession of seventy wise men, known as the science of the Cabala, or reception.⁴

¹See P.S. Allen, ed., Opvs Epistolarvm (Oxford: The University Press, 1958), vol. 12, pp. 30-34.

²Colet, Opuscula, p. 27.

³Compare, Colet, Opuscula, pp. 26-27 and Philo, Legis Allegoriae, Book 1, paragraph no. 2.

⁴Colet, Opuscula, p. 95.

Colet's interpretations of Romans 4:17,¹ and 10:19² also seems to follow Origen closely.

Other ancient Fathers are cited infrequently in matters touching exegesis. Clement of Rome is quoted in supplying historical data bearing upon the coming of Christianity to Rome³. Chrysostom is used to furnish information on Paul's journey to Spain.⁴ Interestingly, Jerome is called upon but once, in order to define fully the meaning of "anathema."⁵

Medieval and Scholastic Writers

As mentioned above, neither Colet nor Erasmus put much stock in Medieval or Scholastic exegetes.⁶ Thomas Aquinas, the one person they both cite, is approached from totally different perspectives. In an annotation on Romans 1:5 Erasmus praised the great Schoolman in saying:

¹Ibid., p. 146.

²Colet, En. Rom., p. 53, see the note.

³Ibid., pp. 125-26.

⁴Ibid., pp. 128 and 130.

⁵Ibid., p. 34.

⁶Louis Bouyer doubts that Erasmus had much knowledge of the exegesis of this period. He makes the point that the majority of writers between 600-1400 A.D. worked mainly with the Old Testament, a subject about which Erasmus had limited expertise, "Erasmus in Relation to the Medieval Biblical Tradition," in The Cambridge History of the Bible, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969) vol. 2, pp. 492-505.

It is noteworthy to consider how Thomas Aquinas agonises over this verse; a man whose greatness has stood the test of time. In my opinion there is no recent theologian who can surpass him in sensitivity, in...wisdom, and in the scope of his learning; ... he skilfully used all the resources that were available to him in his day.¹

Erasmus was somewhat perplexed by Colet's complete rejection of Aquinas. In commenting upon his friend's assessment of the Scotists, he wrote:

...he said he [Colet] considered them dull and stupid, and anything but intellectual. For it was the sign of a poor and barren intellect...to be quibbling about the words and opinions of others...analysing everything so minutely. Yet for some reason he was even harder on Aquinas than on Scotus.²

In a friendly debate, Erasmus had cited Aquinas as one who agreed with his viewpoint. Colet's response was biting:

Why do you preach that writer to me? For, without a full share of presumption, he never would have defined everything in that rash and overweening manner; and without something of a worldly spirit, he would not have so tainted the whole doctrine of Christ with his profane philosophy.³

Colet's rejection of the method of Scholasticism was total. The whole superstructure of scholastic theology, built upon the foundation of Aristotelian logic, held together by isolated proof-texts and citations of innumerable authorities, he saw as unbiblical.⁴ In a digression from his exposition of Romans 1, he contrasted scholastic exegesis with that of Peter and Paul:

¹Erasmus, Annotations, LB, vol. 6, col. 554E.

²Erasmus, The Lives of Jehan Vitrier and John Colet, pp. 32-33.

³Ibid., p. 33.

⁴See F. Seebohm, The Oxford Reformers of 1498, pp. 50-51.

We must remark here, how simple was the mode of citation followed by the apostles, when they quoted a passage from the old testament. This way of ours, which is now in vogue, both with modern theologians and lawyers, of citing authorities from every quarter so minutely by the chapter, had its origin in the ignorance of men who mistrusted themselves and their own learning, and who feared that otherwise credence would not be given them; losing their case in their own secret estimation, unless propped up by supports of this kind. And in the process of time this painful and overscrupulous alleging of authorities has risen to such a pitch, that many devote themselves to it for mere commendation of memory. In a kind of self-display they make their quotations, and find pleasure in heaping up the sayings of other people....¹

Erasmus, though strongly opposed to the Scholastics as a group, did occasionally cite individuals. In his Annotations, both Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas are used as authorities.²

Both men were disposed to accept some later medieval writers. Colet borrowed from Nicholas of Lyra;³ and cited the Baptist of Mantua.⁴ Much more prominent in the Dean's exegesis was the influence of the Italian, Pico della Mirandola. Colet's interest in the questions raised by Genesis chapter one seem to have been rooted in Mirandola's Heptaplus. Lupton noted:

¹Colet, Opuscula, p. 63.

²See A. Rabil Jr., Erasmus and the New Testament, p. 116. For a discussion of Erasmus' reactions to Scholasticism see C. Dalfin, Die Stellung des Erasmus von Rotterdam zur Scholastischen Methode (Osnabruck: Druck von Meinders und Elstermann, 1936); and E.L. Sturtz, "Oxford Reformers and Scholasticism," Studies in Philology, vol. 47, (October, 1950), pp. 547-56.

³Colet, Opuscula, p. 85.

⁴Baptista Mantuanus (Spagnoli), 1447-1516. Colet, En. Rom., p. 33.

There can be little doubt that a study of Mirandola's Heptaplus, or seven-fold exposition of the seven days of the creative week, was at least a proximate cause both of Colet's interest in the subject, and the line he took in his interpretation.¹

Colet quoted from Mirandola extensively in his lectures on I Corinthians.²

Later authorities

Erasmus referred to both Jacques Lefevre d'Etaples and Laurentius Valla in his Annotations, 1516 edition. Only Valla was retained in later editions.³ Erasmus was taken with Valla not only in connection with his philological insights and work in textual criticism, but as an exegete as well. Upon first discovering Valla's Notes on the New Testament, he wrote:

I was taken on the spot with the desire to communicate my discovery to all the studious, thinking it churlish to devour the contents . . . without saying anything about it.⁴

Later in the same letter he advised:

And if there are any who have not the leisure to learn Greek thoroughly, they may still obtain no small help by the studies of Valla, who has examined with remarkable sagacity the whole New Testament, adding incidentally not a few observations out of the Psalms.... I conclude that the studious will owe much to Laurentius...⁵

It is surely reasonable to expect some interchange of ideas between Colet and Erasmus. Although Erasmus never quoted from

¹J.H. Lupton, ed., Opuscula, p. xxiii.

²Colet, En. Cor., p. 138, see also pp. 22, 32, and 132.

³A. Rabil Jr., Erasmus and the New Testament, p. 116.

⁴Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 182, vol. 1, p. 407, Nichols, vol. 1, p. 381.

⁵Ibid., p. 412 and p. 385.

Colet's works in his exegetical writings, we do find significant echoes of the Exposition of Romans in the Annotations. In analysing the meaning of "faith" Colet wrote:

I trust (fido) signifies I believe, I place my hopes. Its opposite is I distrust (diffido). From the word for trust (fido) comes confidence (fidencia), and assurance (fiducia), or tempered boldness: though at times this signifies rash daring.¹

Erasmus, commenting on Romans 1:17 uses similar language:

Jam & fidem & fiduciam dicimus in bonam partem, quae tantum est in credente. Confidere item & fidere, in bonam partem. Confidentem & confidentiam, in malam partem. Verus his vocibus frequenter abuntur Sacrae Litterae.²

In interpreting the term "many" in Romans 5:15 (For if through the offense of one many be dead. . . .) Colet wrote:

By the word many the Apostle means all. He uses indifferently the words many, more, and all; meaning all collectively, excepting the one unit which is the beginning of multitude.³

Erasmus dwelt upon the same point in his annotation on this verse.⁴

The use of authorities

Moving now to the way in which the authorities were used, we find that Colet was far more conservative in citing writers than was Erasmus. This may be accounted for in some degree as a reaction against Scholasticism. "The good scribe," Colet wrote,

who has the means of bringing out of his treasure things new and old, whether in writing or speaking, proceeds in a bolder and more dignified way. His

¹ Colet, Opuscula, p. 137.

² Erasmus, Annotations, LB, vol. 6, col. 562E.

³ Colet, Opuscula, p. 158.

⁴ Erasmus, Annotations, LB, vol. 6, col. 591F.

quotations from other sources, if at times he makes any are both fewer and simpler [than the Scholastic model], and drawn from a remoter antiquity.¹

Colet used the writers he did cite in two basic ways: 1) For explanation of the unclear; and 2) To lend support to his own conclusion. In his exegetical writing, the former far outnumber the latter.

Erasmus employed authorities for the above mentioned purposes as well. He often stated his position on the interpretation of a difficult passage, and then compiled a list of scholarly references to support his view. An example of this practice comes from a note on Romans 4:17. After rendering his opinion, he added, "This is the way that Chrystostom, Theophylactus, and the Greek scholia all interpret it . . . in case you reject it as my own invention."² In this way he hoped to head off any would be critics. In some cases Erasmus would review the divergence of opinion among respected authorities on a given passage. On Paul's controversial statement in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.", he noted that the Fathers generally took one of two views. Some held that sin entered the human race through man's physical relationship to Adam. Others saw sin coming upon man in that all men imitate Adam's original sin. Paving the way for his own interpretation, he argued:

¹Colet, Opuscula, p. 63.

²Erasmus, Annotations, LB vol. 6, col. 580E. For further examples see: LB, vol. 6, cols.: 579C, 581E, 582 D-E, 600F.

I agree that the Church has authority to interpret Scripture, yet the Church's teachers, no matter how great their fame, hesitate over many passages of Scripture, do not concur on many of them, and in some cases actually interpret them incorrectly.¹

This statement underlines the basic presupposition which both Erasmus and Colet held in respect to authorities, namely they were fallible. The modern exegete was to respect them for their piety and wisdom, but not accept them as the final arbiter in questions of interpretation. "I had rather see with my own eyes than with those of others, and . . . as much as they [the Fathers] have said, they have left much to be said by posterity."² Erasmus' words reflect a change in the hermeneutical status of the great teachers of the Church in the sixteenth century. Authority had shifted back to the original texts, which had to be freshly interpreted in light of all the aids of the "New Learning."

¹Ibid., cols. 588F-589B.

²Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 182, vol. 1, p. 412; Nichols, vol. 1, pp. 384.

V. Influence

In attempting an assessment of the influence of John Colet on the development of exegesis in the English Reformation, one is confronted with a conspicuous lack of evidence. For the most part this was due to the fact that, as Thomas Harding wrote, "As for John Colet, he hath never a word to shew, for he wrote no works."¹ The Bible students and theologians of sixteenth century England had no idea that the Dean of St. Paul's had written some considerable "works." It was not until the late 1860's and 1870's, that another mentor at St. Paul's school brought Colet's writings to the attention of the world.² One looks in vain for any reference to Colet's views on the interpretation of a biblical passage among the writers of the Anglican Reformation, or the Counter Reformation. He did not see the importance of publishing, or perhaps had no desire to see his works in print. His influence in the sixteenth century therefore, must be seen as minimal apart from inspiring and tempering the theological mind of his close friend Erasmus.

A good number of works on Erasmus devote considerable space to an analysis of his influence on English exegetical development.³

¹Quoted by J. Lupton, opposite the title page to Colet's Two Treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius.

²Lupton's editions of Colet appeared as follows: Sac., 1867; Opera Dionysii, 1869; En. Rom., 1873; En. Cor., 1874; Opuscula, 1876.

³See H. Exner, Der Einfluss Des Erasmus Auf Die Englische Bildungsidee (Berlin: Junker Dunnhaupt Verlag, 1939) pp. 78-111; J.J. Mangan, Life, Character and Influence of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1928) pp. 391-408; and P. Smith, Erasmus, (London: Harper and Brothers, 1923) pp. 168-186.

Most writers agree that beside the specific literary works he published which dealt either directly or indirectly with hermeneutics, Erasmus, through his contact with Colet and the Oxford intelligentsia, and his short but productive tenure at Cambridge, stimulated an ardour for the application of the "New Learning" to the biblical text. Many of his English friends were fired by the example of Erasmus to begin a study of Greek. Most notable among these were Henry Bullock,¹ John Colet,² and John Fisher.³ In a letter dated August, 1516, Bullock wrote, "Your return to England, learned preceptor, is most welcome to all your Cambridge friends. . . . People here are hard at work upon Greek, and earnestly hope for your arrival."⁴ Erasmus saw the Greek studies which he promoted at Cambridge as a major revitalizing force at the University. He related that on first coming to England, he found the schools stifled by Scholasticism.

Then came some acquaintance with Greek, and with many authors whose very names were unknown to the best scholars of a former time. Now I ask, what has been the result to the University? It has become so flourishing that it may vie with the first schools of the age, and possesses men, compared with whom those old teachers appear as mere shadows of theologians.⁵

The lasting influence of Erasmian exegesis was to come through his many publications. The production of Novum Instrumentum,

¹Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 262, vol. 2, p. 513: Nichols, vol. 2, p. 67.

²Ibid., Allen, epis. no. 468, vol. 2, p. 347: Nichols, vol. 2, pp. 393, 287.

³Ibid., Allen, epis. no. 471, vol. 2, p. 351: Nichols, vol. 2, p. 396.

⁴Ibid., Allen, epis. no. 449, vol. 2, p. 313: Nichols, vol. 2, pp. 317-18.

⁵Ibid., Allen, epis. no. 456, vol. 2, p. 328; Nichols, vol. 2, p. 331

as he entitled the 1516 edition of the New Testament, was the crowning achievement of a lifetime. "To this destiny I was born," he wrote of the Greek and Latin translation, "and it is not for me to fight against providence."¹ This work stood in a unique category. "Let no man take this work with the same feeling that he would, for example the Noctes Atticae, or the Miscellanea of Politan. . . . We are in the presence of Holy Things."²

His stated purpose in undertaking such a monumental task was that of:

...furnishing the Scriptures for Christian hearing so that in the future many more may make use of this sacrosanct philosophy.... May Christ Himself who is our witness and helper in the work we have undertaken, look upon us with disfavour if we seek any reward or gain from our efforts.³

With its initial publication, Novum Instrumentum won great admiration among the more progressive elements of English theological thought. Just nine months after the book came off the presses of J. Froben of Basle, Thomas More wrote to Erasmus saying:

The Bishop of Winchester⁴, who is, as you are aware, a man of very sound judgment, was present at a large gathering of distinguished people when the conversation turned upon you and your lucubrations; he testified to everyone's approval, that your version of the New Testament was better to him than ten commentaries, since it brought so much light to bear upon it.⁵

Colet's appraisal of the work was couched in even more complimentary words:

¹Ibid., Allen, epis. no. 777, vol. 2, p. 328; Nichols, vol. 3, p. 296.

²Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 373, vol. 2, p. 166.

³Ibid.

⁴Richard Foxe, who was to found Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

⁵Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 502, vol. 2, p. 420.

I understand what you say in your letter about the New Testament. The copies of your edition are eagerly bought and everywhere read in this country. Many approve and admire your work; some also disapprove and carp at it... but these latter are men whose praise is blame, and whose blame is praise. For my part, I love your work and welcome this edition of yours.... Do not stop Erasmus, but ... illustrate it [The New Testament] also with expositions and full commentaries on the Gospels. Length with you is brevity. The appetite will grow, if the digestive powers be healthy, in reading what you have written. If you unlock the meaning--as none can do better than yourself--you will confer a great benefit on the lovers of the Scripture, and will immortalize your name. Immortalize, do I say? The name of Erasmus will never perish; but, besides bringing eternal glory on your name you will now, in toiling for Jesus, win for yourself life everlasting.¹

There were those to be sure that did, as Colet said, "disapprove and carp" about the monumental work. The book was prohibited at Cambridge soon after it reached England. The leading critic in England was Edward Lee, a rising theologian who later became Archbishop of York. Lee's attack was based on Erasmus' omission of the verse on the "Three Heavenly Witnesses," and the adulteration of other favourite texts. Despite the irenic intervention of Bishop Richard Foxe, Thomas More, and Richard Pace, Lee published a polemical work against Erasmus in January, 1520.² Erasmus quickly answered Lee's criticisms,³ and ridiculed them for their foolishness.⁴ Erasmus collected letters from those fond of his efforts and critical of Lee's, and published them as a separate volume.⁵

¹ Ibid., Allen, epis. no. 424, vol. 2, pp. 259-40.

² Ibid., epis. no. 998, vol. 4, pp. 9-12.

³ Ibid., LB, vol. 9, cols. 123ff.

⁴ Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 1126, vol. 4, pp. 309-318.

⁵ Erasmus, Epistolae aliquot eruditorum virorum ex quibus perspicuum quanta sit Ed. Lei virulentia (Basle: Froben, 1520).

A further attack was made by Bishop Henry Standish, of ^{St.} Asaph, based primarily on the fact that Erasmus had changed "verbum" to "sermo" in his translation of I John 1:1. Erasmus promptly published an apology against this "Bishop of St. Ass," as he called him.¹

In terms of total editions of the work, England fell far behind the rest of northern Europe's major countries in the publication of Novum Testamentum.² The work was translated into English in 1538, lagging behind the German edition of 1523 and a Dutch in 1525. An Italian version came out in 1545, a Polish edition in 1552, and a French in 1554.³

Perhaps the greatest popular effect upon England came through Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament. In the words of the author, the intent of this effort was, "To close gaps, to soften abrupt transitions, to reduce the confused to order, to smooth out involved sentences, to explain knotty points, to illuminate dark places, to grant Hebraisms the Roman franchise, in short to modernize the language of St. Paul, heavenly orator as he is."⁴ The book was a popularization of Erasmus' interpretation of the text. Its style was free-flowing, yet as he often emphasized, it was done with great care.⁵ Erasmus did not mention the authorities on whom he

¹ Ibid., LB, vol. 9, col. 95.

² There were five editions in England, as compared to twenty-five in France, twenty-seven in the Low Countries, and 206 in the German-speaking countries. See Bibliotheca Erasmiana, ed. Ferdinand Vander-Haeghen (Gand: 1898; facsimile edition, Nieuwkoop, 1961), Series 2, pp. 57-68.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Erasmus, Allen, epis. no. 710, vol. 3, p. 137, trans. P. Smith, Erasmus, p. 187.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 707, 714, 717.

relies, as was the case with the Annotations. The method he employed was to take one verse at a time and to comment upon it.

Of the 165 editions of this work, only one was published in England,¹ yet numerous English translations were available from 1533 on.² The extent of their influence and popular acceptance is attested by the fact that on July 31, 1547, King Edward VI ordered that The Paraphrases be put alongside the Bible in every parish.³ Every minister below the level of Bachelor of Divinity was to have a copy in his library.⁴

Erasmus' Enchiridion received the greatest attention of any of his exegetical works from the English publishers. In the sixteenth century, seven editions were published in London, all in the vernacular.⁵ A translation attributed to William Tyndale came out in 1533.⁶

Erasmus' other hermeneutically oriented works received relatively little attention in England. Of the twenty-one editions

¹Bibliotheca Erasmiana, ed. F. Vander-Haeghen, Series 2, pp. 57-68.

²Ibid.

³Edmund Grindal, Remains, ed. Wm. Nicholson, P.S. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1843) p. 134 and 137.

⁴See E.J. Deveraux, "The Publication of the English Paraphrases of Erasmus," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, vol. 51, 1969, pp. 348-67.

⁵Vander-Haeghen, Bibliotheca Erasmiana, Series 1, pp. 79-84, esp. p. 81.

⁶Ibid.

of Ecclesiastae, none were published in England in the sixteenth century.¹ Though Paraclesis ran through sixty-four editions, only two were English in origin, and both were in the vernacular.² Of the thirty-four printings of Ratio verae theologiae, England once again, could claim none.

Thus, despite his influence at Cambridge, Erasmus' principal exegetical works were not well published in England. J. Mangan summarizes, "Now, if we may judge of the influence which Erasmus exerted on each country by the number of his works printed in that country, then England was less influenced by him than any other of the principal nations of that time."³

¹Ibid., p. 78.

²Ibid., pp. 140-42.

³J. Mangan, Life, Character, and Influence of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, vol. 2, p. 399.

Conclusion

John Colet and Desiderius Erasmus are no less than monumental figures in the history of exegesis in England. It was Colet who first caught the vision for a new method of interpretation. His greatness lies in the determination and courage to swim against the stream of medieval hermeneutical tradition. In doing so the future Dean of St Paul's inspired Erasmus whose literary and philological talents were emerging.

Both men felt the need to escape the hermeneutical labyrinth of Scholastic interpretation. The "way out" was through a return to the "source"-- a fresh, simple interpretation of Scripture. The knowledge of biblical languages, history, philology, archaeology, etc., became an essential pre-requisite to accurate exegesis.

In an important sense Colet's hermeneutical thrust was more radical than that of Erasmus. Suspicious of secular literature, and unwilling to grant any degree of divine illumination to the ancient philosophers and poets, Colet looked to the Bible alone. In that one source of truth, there was but one main sense--singularity being the essence of divine fruitfulness. Thus allegory, although possible, was inferior to, and dependent upon, the literal meaning of the text. In terms of his exegetical method, Colet must be grouped with the Protestant Reformers. His work anticipated the efforts of Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale, Calvin, et al. One can only speculate as to the influence the Dean might have had upon Protestantism in England, had his writings been available in the first half of the sixteenth century.

It is simplistic to categorize Erasmus as belonging to either the grammatico-historical, or spiritualist exegetical camp.¹ Truly he had a foot in each. Erasmus opened the door for the advance of a literal, contextual, and historical understanding of the text, yet he vigorously maintained the need for allegorical interpretation as well. Allegory was a basic tool for literary criticism, and an essential in biblical interpretation by way of reconciling the baseness of the Old Testament with the sublime truth of the New. Despite this concession to the multiple senses of Scripture, Protestant Reformers throughout the sixteenth century drew heavily upon Erasmian tools such as Novum Testamentum, his annotations on the text of the New Testament, and his paraphrases of the same. Erasmus was the great popularizer. His tireless efforts effectively served to raise the consciousness of biblical interpreters to a fresh, clear, and defensible hermeneutic.

¹See J.B. Payne, "Towards the Hermeneutics of Erasmus," Scrinium Erasmianum, vol. 2, pp. 15-16, notes 10-12.

CHAPTER TWO

Early Protestant Exegesis, William Tyndale

The work of William Tyndale marks a new era in the development of biblical exegesis in England. Tyndale is the first English writer of significance who can clearly be placed within the theological ranks of the Reformers. Though living out his productive life in self-imposed exile, his translations of the Pentateuch and New Testament, along with his numerous exegetical and polemical writings, earn for Tyndale a prominent place in the history of the English Reformation.

When turning attention to Tyndale the exegete, one is surprised at the lack of any systematic study of this important aspect of his life and influence. Such a situation may be accounted for by the fact that the translation work of Tyndale has been elevated to such a degree that it has eclipsed his attempts at interpretation. Another factor which may bear upon this issue is that because Tyndale leaned so heavily upon Luther in his work of the 1520's, scholars may have felt his exegesis was not original nor important in its own right.¹

Among his principal biographers one looks in vain for any thorough treatment of his exegetical method. Neither Robert Demaus² nor ^{J.F.} ~~W.E.~~ Mozley³ devote any significant space to Tyndale as an

¹ Philip Hughes has stated that "Tyndale can hardly be reckoned a religious thinker of any real importance. The ideas he puts forth are none of them his own, nor does he add anything of importance to their content." Philip Hughes, The Reformation in England, (London: Hollis and Co., 1956) vol. 1, p. 138.

² R. Demaus, William Tyndale, revised by Richard Lovett, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886).

³ J.F. Mozley, William Tyndale, (London: Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1937).

interpreter. The more recent work of C. H. Williams¹ corrects this situation to some extent in the chapter "Tyndale the Theologian," but though beginning to deal with exegesis, he fails to reach any firm conclusions on the matter. S.L. Greenslade,² and G.E. Duffield³ in their anthologies of Tyndale's work, devote precious little space to an evaluation of his writings.

It is only in works specifically devoted to the theological dialogue of Tyndale that any real analysis of his exegesis emerges. Professor E.G. Rupp discusses Tyndale's exegesis briefly, concluding that the exile was primarily indebted to Luther for his interpretation.⁴ The issue received more intensive study by a group of scholars who view Tyndale as the father of Puritan Covenant Theology.⁵ In their articles one begins to see Tyndale's hermeneutical ideas come into focus.⁶

¹C.H. Williams, William Tyndale (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1969) pp. 122-135.

²S.L. Greenslade, The Work of William Tyndale (London: Blackie and Son Limited, 1938).

³G.E. Duffield, The Work of William Tyndale (Berkshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1964).

⁴E.G. Rupp, The English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: The University Press, 1947), pp. 48-56.

⁵Willaim A. Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 137-204; Jens G. Moller, "The Beginnings of Puritan Covenant Theology," The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol. 14, 1963, pp. 46-67; L.J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," Church History, vol. 20, no.1, 1951, pp. 37-57.

⁶It should be noted that two theses have dealt to some degree with Tyndale's exegesis: A. Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles, 1525-1535," (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1961); R.L. Williams, "Aspects of Heresy and Reformation in England, 1515-1540," (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1976).

Tyndale's interpretative work can be categorized under four main headings: 1) Marginal notes, as seen in his New Testaments of 1525 and 1534, and in the Pentateuch; 2) Prologues and Introductions to various books in the Old and New Testaments; 3) Commentaries, on Jonah, Matthew chapters 5-7, and I John; and 4) Treatises and Polemical writings including, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, Obedience of a Christian Man, The Practice of the Prelates, Answers Unto Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, and A Faithful Treatise on the Sacraments.

In this chapter Tyndale will be shown to be an independent interpreter, who bases his exegesis upon sound hermeneutical principles and a working knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Though profoundly influenced by Luther, especially in the 1520's, Tyndale sometimes disagreed with, and often went beyond the Wittenberg reformer.

¹Tyndale, answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, ed. for the Parker Society by Henry Walter (Cambridge: The University Press, 1840), vol. 1, p. 27. In future references the title will be shortened to Answer to More. All references to Tyndale's works unless otherwise stated, will be taken from the Parker Society volumes edited by Henry Walter.

I. Doctrine of Scripture

For Tyndale, as for the other reformers, the Holy Scripture was the crucial ingredient in a true restoration of the Church. God's people, if they were to escape the superstitions of the Medieval past, had to be exposed to the divine revelation on a personal level. Not only was it essential for them to possess the Scriptures in their "mother tongue," but further, they needed to comprehend the nature, purpose, and proper use of God's Word. Only from such a strategic beachhead could a successful battle be waged against the forces of tradition and papal authority.

Revelation

Tyndale envisioned the creator as one who in grace desired to communicate with His human creations. As history progressed He adapted the form of that revelation to meet the needs of mankind. In his dialogue with More, Tyndale discussed God's great desire to reveal Himself to His people. Before any scripture had been written, God had spoken. From the time of Adam until Moses, ". . . God wrote his testament unto them alway. . . even in sacraments."¹ These "sacraments" were symbolic events: the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, the rainbow shown to Noah, the act of circumcision revealed to Abraham, and ". . . in them they read the Word of God, as we do in books. . . ."² Such partial revelations were sufficient for a time,

¹ Tyndale, Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, edited for the Parker Society by Henry Walter (Cambridge: The University Press, 1850), vol. 3, p. 27. In future references the title will be shortened to Answer to More. All references to Tyndale's works unless otherwise stated, will be taken from the Parker Society volumes edited by Henry Walter.

² Ibid.

"...but in the time of Moses," Tyndale continued, "when the congregation was increased, that they must have many preachers . . . then all was received in scripture."¹ So the Scriptures did in a general way what the "sacraments" had done for specific individuals or groups. The final goal of all God's communication was "To bring [men] unto the fellowship of God and Christ. . . ."²

Holy Scripture as God's Revelation

For Tyndale the Bible was,

"...the light and life of God's elect, and the mighty power wherewith God createth them, and shapeth them, after the similitude, likeness, and very fashion of Christ; and therefore sustenance comfort, and strength to courage them, that they may stand fast, and endure. . . ."³

There was no question in his mind as to its divine origin. He wrote, "The Holy Ghost caused it to be written. . . ."⁴ The Scripture consisted of "God's words."⁵ "The scripture may well be called the kingdom of heaven, which is eternal life, and nothing save the knowledge of God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ."⁶

Without the knowledge contained in God's written revelation man could in no way please God. Tyndale explained that, "... God hath

¹Ibid.

²Tyndale, Exposition of the fyrst epistle of sennt Jhon, P.S. vol. 2, p. 147. All further references to this work in the Parker Society editions shall be stated as, I John.

³Ibid., p. 143.

⁴Tyndale, Prologue to the Prophet Jonas, P.S. vol. 1, p. 463.

⁵Tyndale, Obedience of a Christian Man, P.S. vol. 1, p. 310. All further references shall be stated as, Obedience.

⁶Tyndale, Prologue to the Exposicion upon the V. VI. VII of Mathew, P.S. vol. 2, p. 3. In further references this work shall be cited as Exposition, Matthew V-VII.

put a rule in the scripture, without which thou canst not move an hair of thine head, but that it is damnable in the sight of God."¹

Amplifying this, he wrote:

To give alms, to pray, to fast, or to do anything at all whether between thee and God, or between thee and thy neighbour, canst thou never do to please God therewith, except thou have the true knowledge of God's word to season thy deeds withal.²

As the living expression of God, the Scripture for Tyndale could never be neutral. He saw the Bible as a great polariser:

. . .the nature of God's word is, that whosoever read it, or hear it reasoned and disputed before him, it will begin immediately to make him every day better and better, til he be grown into a perfect man in the knowledge of Christ. . . ; or else make him worse and worse, till he be hardened that he openly resist the Spirit of God, and blaspheme after the example of Pharoa, Korah, Abiram³

To have known the truth of God's word and then to turn back to the "old deeds of ignorance," wrote Tyndale, was to be without excuse. "Then beginneth the just damnation immediately."⁴

The Plenary Value of Scripture

Unlike Erasmus, Tyndale saw the whole of Scripture as valuable and edifying for Christians. There was no need to retreat from the earthy scenes of the biblical narrative into allegory. "There is no story nor gest, seem it never so simple or so vile unto the world, but that thou shalt find therein spirit and life and edifying in the literal sense," he wrote.⁵ The reason underlying such a bold

¹Ibid., p. 78.

²Ibid.

³Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Gospel of St. Matthew, P.S. vol. 1, p. 471.

⁴Ibid., p. 472.

⁵Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 310.

assertion was the simple confidence in the Bible as God's revelation. Tyndale felt it "...is God's scripture, written for thy learning and comfort. There is no clout or rag there, that hath not precious relics wrapt therein of faith, hope, patience, and long suffering, and truth of God, and also of his righteousness."¹ In the Prologue to Genesis Tyndale took up the same theme in more specific terms. He repeats his assertion that there is no story "...so homely, so rude, yea or so vile (as it seemeth outward), wherein is not exceeding great comfort."² He then posits God's rationale for the inclusion of the seemingly repugnant material:

And when some, which seem to be themselves great clerks, say, 'They wot not what more profit is in many gestic of the scripture, if they be read without an allegory, than in a tale of Robin Hood;' say then, 'That they were written for our consolation and comfort, that we despair not if such like happens unto us.'³

As examples of such "rude," "vile" inclusions Tyndale cites, Noah's drunkenness, the sinful act of Lot's daughters, and David's trespass into adultery and murder. "All these men," Tyndale continues, "have witness of the scripture that they pleased God, and were good men. . . Nevertheless such things happened them [sic] for our ensample, not that we should counterfeit their evil; but if we fall likewise, that we despair not, but come again to the laws of God, and take better hold."⁴ "For if we saw not such infirmities in God's elect, we, which are so weak and fall so oft, should utterly despair, and think that God had clean forsaken us."⁵

¹Ibid.

²Tyndale, Prologue to Genesis, P.S. vol. 1, p. 399.

³Ibid., p. 400.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 311.

As a corollary to the universal value of Scripture, Tyndale held that the Bible contained ". . . everything necessary unto our soul's health, both of what we ought to believe, and what we ought to do. . . ." ¹ There would be no value in seeking the truth about God and man's relationship with Him from any extrabiblical source Tyndale argued, ". . . seeing that Christ and all the apostles with all the angels of heaven, if they were here could preach no more than is preached, of necessity unto our souls. . . ." ²

The natural result of such an elevated view of scripture was a hermeneutic in which any text was treated as being applicable to the Christian. Tyndale counsels, "As thou readest . . . think that every syllable pertaineth to thine own self, and suck out the pith of the scripture, and arm thyself against all assaults." ³

¹ Tyndale, Answer to More, P.S. vol. 3, p.26.

² Ibid., pp. 27-28.

³ Tyndale, Prologue to Genesis, P.S. vol. 1, p. 400.

II. Interpretation and the Senses of Scripture

Illumination

Linked with Tyndale's high view of Scripture, was the conviction that accurate interpretation was much more a divine act than a human one. Man was to use his natural intelligence and powers of observation to equip himself to comprehend the words of the Scripture, yet one must never think that he may know the "meaning" of a text merely by the use of human faculties. Tyndale, like Colet, took a minimalist view of the role of human philosophy and wisdom in the interpretation of the Bible. He wrote: "The spirit of the world understandeth not the speaking of God, neither the spirit of the wise of this world, neither the spirit of philosophers, neither the spirit of Socrates, of Plato, or of Aristotle's ethics. . . ." ¹ "The scripture hath a body without, and within a soul, spirit, and life," he explained. ² "It hath without a bark, a shell, as it were a hard bone, for the fleshly minded to gnaw upon." ² The wise of this world could "gnaw" upon the Bible, but never derive its nourishment. Yet for the man who was illuminated by the Holy Spirit, the same Scripture "...hath pith, kernel, marrow, and all sweetness. . . ." ³

The exegete, if he was to be successful, must "thirst" after the truth, ". . .desiring God to open the door of knowledge unto him." ⁴ This thirsting, if it was to be effective, had to be protracted.

¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 107; see also pp. 154-55 and pp. 157-59.

²Tyndale, Prologue to the Prophet Jonas, P.S. vol. 1, p. 449.

³Ibid.

⁴Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 156.

"We must. . . desire God day and night instantly, to open our eyes, and to make us feel whereof the scripture was given . . ."; he wrote in his Prologue to Genesis.¹ In Parable of the Wicked Mammon, he echoes this principle: ". . . Let every man pray to God to send him his Spirit, and loose him from his natural blindness and ignorance and to give him understanding and feeling of the things of God. . . ."²

Such a position on the necessity of illumination was a natural outgrowth of Tyndale's view of the Spirit's superintendence over the writing of Scripture. ". . . The scripture" he wrote, "is nothing else but that which the Spirit of God hath spoken by the prophets and apostles, and cannot be understood but of the same Spirit. . . ."³ And again ". . . As they [scriptures] came by the Holy Ghost, so must they be expounded and understood by the Holy Ghost."⁴

The Primacy of the Literal Sense

Tyndale stands in the line of Erasmus and Colet in his stress upon the importance of the literal sense as a basis for sound interpretation. His voice was added to their's in scorning those who ignorantly misused the Bible, a practice all too common in the early Tudor period:

. . . Whatsoever they read in Aristotle, that must first be true; and to maintain that, they read and tear the scriptures with their distinctives, and expound them violently, contrary to the meaning of the text, and to the circumstances that go before and after, and to a thousand clear and evident texts. Wherefore I have taken in hand to expound this Gospel . . . to bring the scripture unto the right sense.⁵

¹ Tyndale, Prologue to The Book of Genesis, P.S. vol. 1, p. 398.

² Tyndale, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, P.S. vol. 2, pp. 88-89. In further references this work will be stated as Mammon.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 317.

⁵ Tyndale, Mammon, P.S. vol. 1, p. 46.

"Thou shalt understand," he wrote in Obedience of a Christian Man, ". . .that the scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that the literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth."¹ If an interpreter constantly seeks the literal sense, he ". . .can never err nor go out of the way."² Conversely, by wandering off into any other sense one ". . . canst not but go out of the way."³ Tyndale was quick to clarify such a bold assertion:

. . .The scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle, or allegory signifieth, is even the literal sense, which thou must seek out diligently.⁴

Thus Tyndale is arguing for a "normal" interpretation of the text. Behind the various literary devices employed by the biblical authors is a commonly understood meaning. Figures of speech, metaphors, allegories,⁵ etc. are merely meant to enhance and illustrate this basic sense. Tyndale illustrated as follows:

We say. . . 'Look ere thou leap': whose literal sense is 'Do nothing suddenly, or without advisement.' 'Cut not the bough that thou standest upon': whose literal sense is, 'Oppress not the commons'; and is borrowed from the hewers.⁶

¹ Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 304.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. Tyndale's emphasis on the central importance of the literal sense may reflect Luther, who in his treatise "Against Latomus" (1521) wrote: "In no writings, least of all the divine, is it right in mere whimsey to grasp at figurative meanings. These ought to be shunned, and the pure, simple, original sense should be sought...." Luther's Works, trans. G. Lindbeck, vol. 32, p. 167.

⁵ Tyndale's view of allegory will be discussed below.

⁶ Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 304.

His examples took a polemical twist as he continued:

When a thing speedeth not well, we borrow speech
and say, 'The bishop hath blessed it;' because that
nothing speedeth well that they meddle withal.¹

In the same manner, Tyndale urged the Scripture makes use of images and figures of speech from many different aspects of life, and with these enhances the normal sense;

So when I say, 'Christ is a lamb;' I mean not a lamb that beareth wool, but a meek and a patient lamb which is beaten for another man's faults. 'Christ is a vine;' not that beareth grapes; but out of whose root the branches that believe suck the Spirit of life, and mercy, and grace, and power to be the sons of God, and to do his will.²

Applying this premise to hyperbolic expressions, Tyndale commented upon the provocative passage, "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it away from you"

(Matthew 5:29):

This is not meant of the outward members. For then we must cut off nose, ears, hands, and foot; yea, we must procure to destroy. . . the seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, and so every man kill himself. But it is a phrase out of the Hebrew tongue, and will that we cut off occasions, dancing, kissing, riotous eating and drinking . . . and filthy imaginations, that move a man to concupiscence.³

In the same way Christ's exhortation to "turn the other cheek"

(Matthew 5:39), ". . . is a manner of speaking, and not to be understood as the words sound."⁴ To explain, Tyndale used a bit of parental hyperbole:

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 305.

³Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 2, pp. 50-51.

⁴Ibid., pp. 58-59.

...We command our children not only not to come nigh a brook or water; but also not so hardy [sic] as once to look that way. . .which [is] impossible to be observed. More is spoken than meant, to fear them; and to make them perceive that it is earnest that we command.¹

The normal sense of the parent's admonition is commonly understood. In the same way, the interpreter must always seek the sense behind the mere words, the "literal sense" as Tyndale called it, but not rigid, wooden literalism.²

The "literal sense" of parabolic scripture was to be found in the one primary message of the story. Tyndale warned against pushing an analogy beyond its intended purpose. "They that will interpret parables word by word, fall into straits oftentimes whence they cannot rid themselves; and preach lies instead of truth."³ The parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-35) was cited as an example. Interpretation which focused on the parts, neglecting the central message, was dangerous. Some, he noted, considered the "two pence" to point toward the Old and New Testaments, while the gracious provision of the Samaritan for the needs of the wounded man was sometimes interpreted as opera supererogationis, or "deeds which are more than the law requireth."⁴ He wisely cautioned:

¹Ibid.

²This theme of finding the "meaning" of a text behind the mere words is also characteristically Lutheran. In his treatise "On Translating: An Open Letter," Luther discussed the importance of seeking to convey the "normal" sense of the passage when translating Scripture. Defending his rendering of Romans 3:23 he wrote, "... I know very well that the word solum is not in the Greek or Latin text.... At the same time they [the Roman Catholic critics of his translation] do not see that it conveys the sense of the text; it belongs there if the translation is to be clear and vigorous." Luther's Works, trans. C. Jacobs, vol. 35, p. 188.

³Tyndale, Mammon, P.S., vol. 1, p. 86.

⁴Ibid.

Remember, this is a parable, and a parable may not be expounded word by word; but the intent of the similitude must be sought out only in the whole parable. The intent of the similitude is to show to whom a man is a neighbour, or who is a man's neighbour... and what it is to love a man's neighbour as himself.¹

Tyndale's most systematic application of this principle came in his work The Parable of the Wicked Mammon.² Christ's story contained one simple truth: ". . . thou shouldest do good; and so it will follow. . . that thou shall find friends and treasure in heaven, and receive a reward."³ Since the parable was intended to teach only one central truth, the exegete was not to relate extraneous elements of the narrative to the Christian life. The "unrighteous steward" was praised for his wisdom alone, in providing for himself. His action was not to be condoned merely because it was part of Christ's story. Thus the dealings of the "unrighteous steward" teach only that ". . . we with righteousness should be as diligent to provide for our souls as he with unrighteousness provided for his body."⁴ In the same way the parable of the prosperous farmer who planned to build larger barns, only to die that night (Luke 12:16-21), was not meant to teach that God forbade acquiring wealth. The "literal sense" was rather that one was not to love or put his trust in earthly securities.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 85. See also "Marginal Notes on Matthew," P.S., vol. 2, p. 235.

²Tyndale, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 29-126.

³Ibid., p. 65.

⁴Ibid., p. 70.

⁵Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S., vol. 2, p. 101

Consistently, in figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, and parables; Tyndale's axiom for proper interpretation was the same. The exegete was to seek the normal intent of the writer within the framework of the literal sense of the passage.

Allegory

Tyndale held that the proper use of allegory could be a great aid in preaching the Gospel. The abuse of allegory however, opened a doctrinal "Pandora's Box" upon the Church. Tyndale felt that allegorical method was abused when it was employed as a means of interpretation. In the Prologue to Exodus he warned, "Cleave unto the text and the plain story, and endeavour thyself to search out the meaning of all that is described therein, and the true sense of all manner of speakings of the scripture. . .and beware of subtle allegories."¹ The same caution was voiced in his Prologue to Leviticus: "We had need to take heed everywhere that we be not beguiled with false allegories, whether they be drawn out of the New Testament or of the Old. . . ."²

Tyndale felt that allegorical interpretation was ". . .the great cause of . . .captivity and decay of the faith, and this blindness wherein we are now. . . ."³ Out of the misuse of allegory sprang a host of false teachings, including: prayer to saints, purgatory, auricular confession, the preference of fish over meat, the belief that widowhood was better than matrimony, and that the Virgin Mary was without original sin.⁴ Such a mother of heresies,

¹Tyndale, Prologue to Exodus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 411.

²Tyndale, Prologue to Leviticus. P.S. vol. 1, p. 425.

³Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 307.

⁴Ibid., p. 313.

hinted Tyndale, must be demonically instigated. "Here [in dealing with allegory] a man had need to put on all his spectacles and arm himself against invisible spirits."¹

Tyndale traced the growth of allegorical interpretation from the Ancient Church to the sixteenth century. As with his contemporaries in reformation, Tyndale pointed the finger of accusation most often at Origen. "For Origen, and the doctors of his time drew all the scripture unto allegories: whose ensample they that came after followed so long, till they at last forgot the order and process of the text, supposing that the scripture served but to feign allegories . . ."² As allegorical interpretation dominated, the literal sense of the Old Testament began to sink into obscurity. This in turn further enslaved the Church to allegory ". . .because that few knew the use of the Old Testament, and the most part thought it nothing necessary but to make allegories. . . ."³ Tyndale saw the rise in ceremonies in the Church as a corollary to allegorical interpretation:

. . . They [the prelates] thought it superfluous to preach the plain text any longer... (forasmuch as all such things were played before the people's faces daily in the ceremonies, and every child wist the meaning;) but got them into allegories, feigning them every man after his own brain, without rule . . .⁴

¹Tyndale, Prologue to Leviticus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 425.

²Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 307. Along the same line Tyndale writes: "Consider also, how studiously Rochester [John Fisher] allegeth Origen, both for his pope, and also to stablish his blind ceremonies withal: which Origen of all heretics is condemned to be the greatest." Ibid. p. 220.

³Tyndale, Prologue to Leviticus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 425.

⁴Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 3, p. 75.

Such a state of hermeneutical chaos was further intensified noted Tyndale, by,

. . .disputings, and wasting their brains about words, not attending to the significations. . . .As a result the laypeople had lost the meaning of ceremonies, and the prelates the understanding of the plain text, and of the Greek, and Latin, as specially of the Hebrew which is most of need to be known, and of all phrases, the proper manner of speakings and borrowed speech of the Hebrews.¹

Finally, reflecting upon the current state of exegesis, Tyndale wrote:

Then came our sophists with their anagogical and chopological [sic] sense, and with an antitheme of half and inch. . . .some of them draw a thread of nine days long. Yea thou shalt find enough that will preach Christ, and prove whatsoever point of the faith that thou wilt, as out of a fable of Ovid or any other poet, as out of St. John's Gospel or Paul's epistles. Yea, they are come unto such blindness, that they not only say the literal sense profiteth not, but also that it is hurtful, and noisome, and killeth the soul.²

So strong was Tyndale's aversion to allegorical interpretation that he resisted the influence of his theological mentor Martin Luther, when he, in a rare instance, drifted toward a spiritualised interpretation. In his Prologue to Philemon,³ Tyndale follows Luther's Vorrede auf die Epistel Sanct Pauli zu Philemon, word for word, yet stops short when Luther concludes:

Eben wie vns Christus than hatt gegen Got dem vatter, also thut auch S. Paulus fur Onesimo gegen Philemon. Denn Christus hat sich auch seynes rechten geeussert, vnd mit lieb vnd demut den vatter vbirwunden, das er seynen zorn vnd recht hat müssen legen, vnd vns zu gnaden nemen,

¹ Ibid.

² Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, pp. 307-308.

³ Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon, P.S. vol. 1, p. 520.

vmb Christus willen, der also ernstlich vns vertritt, vnd sich vnser so hertzlich annympt, Denn wyr sind alle seyne Onesimi, so wyr glewben.¹

When Tyndale speaks of the proper use of allegories, he restricts his definition to a metaphor employed for illustrative purposes. It is in this sense of the word that he writes:

...There is not a better, vehementer, or mightier thing to make a man understand withal, than an allegory. For allegories make a man quick-witted, and print wisdom in him, and make it to abide, where bare words go but in at the one ear, and out at the other.²

Tyndale reasoned that as the authors of Scripture used analogies of earthly things, so the preacher could borrow images from Scripture to illustrate his point. He explained that such a use is in ". . . no sense of the scripture, but free things beside the scripture. . . ."³ An example came from the Gospel narrative of Peter slicing off Malchus' ear. "There thou hast in the plain text great learning, great fruit. . . which I pass over because of tediousness."⁴ In preaching, this same story could be a striking picture of spiritual realities.

As Peter's sword cutteth off the ear, so doth the law: the law damnth, the law killeth, and mangleth the conscience....⁵

¹M. Luther, "Vorrede auff die Epistle sanct Pauli zu Philemon," in D. Martin Luthers Werke, Die Deutsche Bible, H. Bohlaus, gen. ed., (Weimar: Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt-Graz, 1906-), Band 7, p.292. Future references to this work will appear as, Luther, Die Deutsche Bible, Weimar Text, band and page.

²Tyndale, Prologue to Leviticus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 428.

³Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 305.

⁴Ibid., p. 306.

⁵Ibid.

In this allegorical illustration, Christ revealed the nature of grace in healing both the ear and conscience which the law had wounded. Then to make his point, Tyndale noted:

This allegory proveth nothing, neither can do. For it is not the scripture, but an ensample or a similitude borrowed of the scripture, to declare a text or a conclusion of the scripture more expressly, and to root it and grave it in the heart.¹

Unless the point or issue which the allegory illustrates is openly taught in a clear passage of scripture, then such an allegory would be ". . .a thing to be jested at, and of no greater value than a tale of Robin Hood."² In the Obedience of A Christian Man Tyndale cautions that the preacher

. . .that bringeth a naked similitude to prove that which is contained in no text, count a deceiver, a leader out of the way, and a false prophet, and beware of his philosophy. . . For the reasons and similitudes of man's wisdom make no faith, but wavering and uncertain opinions only. . . .³

Tyndale urged that allegories must never be used to prove a doctrine or teaching of the Church. Circumcision, he reasoned, could be seen as a figure of baptism, ". . .yet thou canst not prove baptism by circumcision. . . ."⁴ Enlisting the Apostle as an example (I Corinthians 10) he continued, "Paul also. . .maketh the rock out of which Moses brought water unto the children of Israel, a figure or ensample of Christ; not to prove Christ (for that were impossible) but to describe Christ only."⁵

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 307.

³Ibid., p. 306.

⁴Tyndale, Prologue to Leviticus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 426.

⁵Ibid. Tyndale also notes Paul's use of Hagar and her son in Obedience, P.S., vol. 1, p. 307.

In Tyndale's exegesis, "...the literal sense proves the allegory."¹ Because allegories prove nothing, they are, "...to be used soberly and seldom, and only where the text offereth thee an allegory."²

Typology

Closely related to, though distinct from Tyndale's illustrative use of allegory, is his typological exegesis. Typology, unlike allegory is always related to the life and work of Christ in Tyndale's writings.

In arguing for a complete English Bible, Tyndale noted that God gave the Old Testament to the Jews in their own language, "...and there was Christ but figured, and described in ceremonies, in riddles, and parables, and in dark prophecies."³ Why not have the Old Testament in English, he asked, "...with the New also, which is the light of the Old, and wherein is openly declared, before the eyes, that which there was darkly prophesied?"⁴ The great translator became more explicit when dealing with the ceremonial law and the sacrificial system of Leviticus.

...All the ceremonies and sacrifices have, as it were, a star light of Christ, yet some there be that have, as it were, the light of the broad day...and express him, and the circumstances and virtue of his death so plainly, as if we should play his passion on a scaffold, or in a stage play.⁵

¹ Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 307.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 144.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Tyndale, Prologue to Leviticus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 422.

Those sacrifices and ceremonies which picture Christ "in the broad light of day," include: the scape-goat, the brazen serpent, the ox burnt without the gate, and the passover lamb.¹ In reflecting upon these "types" of Christ, Tyndale wrote:

...I am fully persuaded, and cannot but believe, that God had shewed Moses the secrets of Christ, and the very manner of his death beforehand, and commanded him to ordain them for the confirmation of our faith.²

One sees in Tyndale's typology in clearest terms, that which permeates his interpretation, namely, a strong Christocentric exegesis. This is intensified by his "high" view of inspiration. "The scriptures spring out of God," he wrote, "and flow unto Christ, and were given to lead us to Christ. Thou must go along by the scripture as by a line, until thou come at Christ, which is the way's end and resting place."³

We see in Tyndale's approach to the text a continuation and amplification of Colet's emphasis on the single sense of Scripture. The literal sense for Tyndale was the root of all interpretation. The task of the exegete was to find the normal meaning of the various types of language employed by the biblical writers, all of which came under the category of the literal sense. Allegory was only to be used as a sermonic device, where it could effectively illustrate a clear scriptural principle. Allegorical interpretation, on the other hand, was a clear and present danger in Tyndale's eyes. When

¹Ibid.

²Ibid. See also Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 1, p. 144.

³Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 317.

he was faced with allegory in Scripture, Tyndale did not attempt an interpretation. He wrote no prologue to John's Revelation, admitting, "The apocalypse, or revelations of John, are allegories whose literal sense is hard to find in many places."¹

Education

Although Tyndale's early education remains an unknown factor, he received his B.A. degree from Oxford University in July of 1512. Three years later he took his M.A. from the same institution. During this Oxford period Foxe indicates that Tyndale developed a marked linguistic capacity which was to serve him well in later years:

...by long continuance [he] grew up, and increased as well in the knowledge of tongues, and other liberal arts, and especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly inclined; insomuch that he, lying then in St. Dunstons hall, read privately in certain

The main source of allegation that Tyndale lacked the necessary linguistic skills to do original work is due to George Foxe. His criticisms of Tyndale will be discussed below.

Tyndale, and cannot even be specified as to the time of his arrival, probably between 1490 and 1495. See G.H. Williams, *The English Renaissance*, pp. 100-101 and 102-103.

¹ Tyndale, P.S., vol. 1, p. 305.

The Clarendon Press, 1887, vol. 1, p. 80.

J. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. 2, p. 128.

III. Tyndale's Linguistic Skills

Any discussion of Tyndale's expertise as an exegete must take into account his linguistic abilities. Although the great majority of scholars accept the translator as a linguist par excellence of the sixteenth century, doubts have arisen as to his capabilities.¹ This question will be dealt with on the basis of Tyndale's education, his reputation as a scholar, and most importantly, the evidence of his works.

Education

Although Tyndale's early education remains an unknown factor,² he received his B.A. degree from Oxford University in July of 1512.³ Three years later he took his M.A. from the same institution.⁴ During this Oxford period Foxe indicates that Tyndale developed a marked linguistic capacity which was to serve him well in later years:

...by long continuance [he] grew up, and increased as well in the knowledge of tongues, and other liberal arts, and especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted; insomuch that he, lying then in Magdalen hall, read privily to certain

¹The main source of allegation that Tyndale lacked the necessary linguistic skills to do original exegesis came from George Joye. His criticisms of Tyndale will be discussed below.

²Indeed, one cannot even be specific as to the date of his birth; probably between 1490 and 1495. See C.H. Williams, William Tyndale, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1969), p.2.

³C.W. Boase, Register of the University of Oxford, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1885), vol. 1, p. 80.

⁴J. Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 5, p. 115.

students and fellows of Magdalen College,¹ some parcel of divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures.²

Though there is some opinion to the contrary, most writers believe that following his Oxford days, Tyndale went over to Cambridge University.³ If so, he would have just missed the presence of Erasmus who left the University in 1514. Undoubtedly the influence of the great humanist lived on at Cambridge, and in view of the fact that Enchiridion Militis Christiani was translated into English by Tyndale, one can postulate a strong Erasmian influence upon the young Englishman.⁴

It is reported by Foxe that while at Cambridge, Tyndale ". . . further ripened in the knowledge of God's word."⁵ One finds no evidence however, that the budding linguist took a degree at

¹Anderson notes that Magdalen College was at that time called "Grammar Hall" due to the emphasis placed on classical learning there. The faculty included Grocyn, W. Latimer, and Linacre. Christopher Anderson, The Annals of the English Bible, (London: William Pickering, 1845), vol. 1, p. 26.

²John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 5, p. 115.

³Ibid.

⁴E.G. Rupp, Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation, in vol. 17, Library of Christian Classics, (London: 1969), p. 4.

⁵John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 5, p. 115.

Cambridge. It is quite possible that he attended the public lectures on the Greek language delivered by Richard Croke.¹

Joye's Criticisms

Any doubts scholars may have regarding Tyndale's linguistic ability are linked with the testimony of the translator's sometime colleague, George Joye.² The two men had a serious "falling out" over the doctrinal question of the intermediate state of the soul. Joye held that immediately upon death, the soul passes to the glorious presence of God in heaven. Tyndale espoused an alternate position very similar to that commonly known as "soul sleep," though he never used the phrase. He felt that the danger of Joye's position was that it vitiated the necessity for a bodily resurrection.

The feud became bitter when Joye, at the instigation of an anxious printer, consented to correct Tyndale's 1526 edition of the New Testament.³ Among the corrections that Tyndale found especially

¹J.F. Mozley, William Tyndale, (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1937) pp. 17-18. Richard Croke (1489?-1558), received his B.A. at Cambridge before moving over to Oxford to study Greek under Grocyn. His language studies were continued in Paris. He taught Greek at Louvain, Cologne, and Leipzig, before returning to Cambridge. He was elected public orator of the University in 1522, and the following year became a fellow of St. John's College. Both Cambridge and Oxford awarded him the degree D.D.; D.N.B., vol. 13, pp. 119-121.

²See L. Franklin Gruber, The First English New Testament and Luther, (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Lit. Board, 1928) pp. 54 and 114.

³For an excellent discussion of this unfortunate controversy see Charles C. Butterworth and Allen G. Chester, George Joye 1495?-1553, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), pp. 165-182.

galling, were those Joye made in regard to the Greek word ἀνάστασις. This term, which literally means "standing up again," and which the Vulgate rendered resurrectio, Tyndale had consistently translated "resurrection." Joye changed "resurrection" in many places to "the life after death." Such a correction was made all the more unpalatable to Tyndale by the fact that the corrector remained anonymous.

A heated exchange of tracts ensued. In Joye's An Apologye made by George Joye, one finds the following emotion-laden passage:

And I saye/ I haue made many changes which yf T. had had sicke sight in the greke as he pretendeth and conferred yt diligently with the greke as he sayth he did/ he shulde haue made the same changes him self/ which places I shal poynt him to here after/ but yet let Tindale loke ouer his Testament once agene and conferre yt a lytle beter withe the verite greke to. . . .¹

Later in the same work Joye added;

If he were so wel sene in the greek as he maketh him selfe/ doing sicke diligence in this his correccion as he pretendeth and professeth/ he shulde haue lefte out some of so many wayne and fryuole [sic] notis in the mergent nothing corresponding nor expowning the texte.²

In these polemical blasts, Joye not only makes Tyndale out to be a braggart, but also implies that he lacked the necessary expertise in Greek to be an effective translator and critic. At another point in the "Apologye" Joye asks, ". . .I wounder how he coude compare yt with Greke sith himselfe is not so exquisitely sene thereyn?"³

¹ George Joye, An Apologye made by George Joye to satisfye (if it maye be) W. Tindale, manuscript in the Cambridge University Library, (London: 1535), quoted from L. Frankling Gruber, The First English New Testament and Luther, (Burlington Iowa: The Lutheran Lit. Board, 1928), p. 44.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 38.

Later he added, "For T. I know wel was not able to do it [translation and correction] with out sicke an helper which he hath euer had hitherto."¹

Perhaps the first question one should consider in assessing Joye's analysis of Tyndale, is whether Joye himself was equipped to reach a critical opinion on the matter. Was he an adequate judge of Tyndale's skill? Joye's principal biographers write:

. . .the most unwarranted of Joye's criticisms of Tyndale is that the latter was a poor scholar and that Joye himself was qualified to correct his errors. Just the opposite was true. For his time, Tyndale was a highly competent Grecian. Joye was at best a tyro.²

That Joye should translate ἀναστάσις as "the life after death" casts a shadow over his competence as a Greek scholar. Butterworth and Charles write: "Neither etymologically nor historically was there authority for Joye's figurative rendering. . . ."³

Most of Joye's "corrections" seem to reflect a reference to the Latin Vulgate, rather than the Greek. Others, apparently designed to clarify the text, do in fact depart from it. To quote Westcott, ". . . none mark a critical examination of the original."⁴

In his Apologye Joye at one point seems to admit Tyndale's skill with languages. He writes, "I am not afraid to answer Master Tindall in this matter [the state of the soul after death] for all his high learning in his Hebrew, Greek, Latin, etc."⁵ Whether such

¹Ibid., p. 40.

²Charles C. Butterworth and Allen G. Chesyer, George Joye 1495-1553, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), p. 180.

³Ibid.

⁴B.F. Westcott, History of the English Bible, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1905) pp. 46-7.

⁵Butterworth and Allen, George Joye, p. 34.

a statement reflects sarcasm or intellectual insecurity is difficult to say, but it does suggest that Joye was not an objective critic of Tyndale's skill.

The evidence for Tyndale's ability with languages is impressive. There is an excerpt from the diary of George Spalatin who records that one Hermann von dem Bussche while visiting Worms in 1526, heard of work being done on the New Testament in English. The translator was described as an Englishman skilled in seven languages, all of which he spoke like a native. The languages were: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, and French.¹

Apart from rumour, an examination of Tyndale's life's work reveals hard evidence of his ability with languages. The earliest reference to translation from Greek was in 1522. At this time Tyndale, wanting to begin a translation of the New Testament into English, presented himself to the bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall. Tyndale recollects:

Then I thought, if I might come to this man's service I were happy. And so I got me to London, and, through the acquaintance of my master, came to Sir Harry Gilford, the King's grace's comptroller, and brought him an Oration of Isocrates, which I had translated out of the Greek into English.²

¹ Some doubt has been raised regarding this report due to the fact that German was omitted. "Item Wormatiae VI. mille exemplaria Novi Testamenti Anglice excusa. Id operis verum esse ab Anglo, illic cum duobus aliis Britannis divertente, ita VII. linguarum perito, Hebraicae, Graecae, Latinae, Italicae, Hispanicae, Britannicae, Gallicae, ut, quamcunque loquatur, in ea natum putes." Johann G. Shellhorn, Amoenitates Literariae Quibus Variae Observationis, (Frankfurt and Leipzig: 1730) vol. 4, pp. 431-32.

² Tyndale, Prologue to the Five Books of Moses, P.S. vol. 1, p. 395.

For religio-political reasons, not for lack of scholarship, Tunstall felt the time was not right for such an undertaking, and Tyndale left England for Europe to seek a more suitable setting in which to pursue his work. The printers of Worms, Hamburg, Antwerp, etc. were anxious to develop the English market in reading matter. It was in these publishing centers that Tyndale developed his skills in translation, theological treatise, and polemical writings.

Tyndale's linguistic prowess is evidenced, according to Westcott, ". . . by the steady confidence with which he deals with points of Hebrew and Greek philology when they casually arise."¹ An example of such occurs in the Prologue to Matthew's Gospel. Tyndale wrote:

. . . Consider the Hebrew phrase or manner of speech, left in the Greek words; whose preterperfect tense and present tense are oft both one, and the future tense is the optative also, and the future tense oft the imperative mood in the active voice, and in the passive ever. Likewise person for person, number for number, and interrogative for a conditional, and such like, is with the Hebrews a common usage.²

Tyndale's works are liberally sprinkled with the evidence of keen etymological interest and investigation. In commenting on I John 2:2, "And he is the satisfaction for our sins. . . ." Tyndale wrote:

That I call satisfaction, the Greek calleth Ilasmos [ἰλασμός] and the Hebrew Copar [קָפַר] : and it is first taken for the suaging of wounds, sores, and swellings, and the taking away of pain and smart of them; and thence is borrowed for the pacifying and suaging of wrath and anger, and for amends making, a contenting, satisfaction and ransom, and making at one, as it is seen abundantly in the bible.³

¹Westcott, English Bible, p. 131.

²Tyndale, Prologue to the Gospel of Matthew, P.S. vol. 1, p. 468.

³Tyndale, Exposition of I John, P.S. vol. 2, p. 154.

The writer's feeling for the evolution of language is obvious from such a passage.

Concerning the Egyptian name that Pharoah gave to Joseph, "Zaphenath-paneah," Tyndale remarked, "Words of Egypt are they (as I suppose); and as much to say as 'a man to whom secret things be opened;' or 'an expounder of secret things.'"¹ Such an analysis becomes more impressive when one considers that: 1) the Septuagint gives no interpretation, but just states ὑποφωτιστής ; 2) the Vulgate reads, "Vocavit eum lingua Aegyptiaca, salvatorem mundi"; and 3) Luther translated, "Nennete ihn den heimlichen rath." Thus Tyndale came up with a tenable and seemingly original explanation of the name--one which went into the margin of the Authorized Version.

Explaining his choice of the word "Marshall" to translate the Hebrew words אֲדִיָּהוּן (K.J.V. "Captain of the guard"), a description of Potiphar, Tyndale wrote:

In Hebrew he is called A Sartabaim: as thou wouldest say, 'Lord of the slaughterman.' And though that Tabaim be taken for cooks in many places, (for the cooks did slay the beasts themselves in those days,) yet it may be taken for them that put men to execution also. And that I thought it should here best signify, insomuch as he had the oversight of the king's prison, and the king's prisoners, were they never so great men, were under his custody: and therefore I call him chief marshall, an officer, as it were the lieutenant of the Tower, or master of the Marshalsea.²

¹ Tyndale, "A Table Expounding Certain Words in Genesis," P.S. vol. 1, p. 409.

² Ibid., p. 408.

One must admire Tyndale's insight in using a cognate term to clarify the word in question. Such an analysis is in substantial agreement with modern Hebrew lexicographers.¹

Tyndale's etymological conclusions were carefully checked against respected authorities. Such care is illustrated in a theological discussion of "repentance:"

The Hebrew hath in the old testament generally turn, or be converted: for which the translation that we like for St. Jerome's hath most part converti 'to turn, to be converted,' and sometime agere poenitentiam. And the Greek in the New Testament hath perpetually μετανοεω, to turn in heart and mind, and to come to the right knowledge. . . . And Erasmus useth much this word resipisco, 'I come to myself, or to my right mind again,' And the very sense and signification both of the Hebrew and also the Greek word is, to be converted, to turn to God with all the heart.²

One of More's chief concerns respecting Tyndale's New Testament was the changes he introduced in key terms. One such translation was the use of "elder" for πρεσβύτερος, which More argued should be "priest." Tyndale's solid argument for "elder" demonstrates his grasp of synonymous Greek terms:

...Why used not the apostles the Greek word hiereus, of the interpreter this Latin word sacerdos, but alway this word presbyteros and senior, by which was at that time signified but an elder? And it was no doubt taken of the custom of the Hebrews, where the officers ever were elderly men, as nature requireth: as it appeareth in the old testament, and also in the new."³

¹ See Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, editors, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 370-71.

² Tyndale, Prologue to the Gospel of Matthew, P.S. vol. 1, p. 477.

³ Tyndale, Answer to More, P.S. vol. 3, p.20.

Another example of Tyndale's sensitivity to subtle shades of meaning is seen in his discussion of the biblical terms for "hell" in the English Bible. He wrote: "Infernus and Gehenna signifieth a place of punishment; but infernus is taken for any manner of place beneath in the earth, as a grave, sepulchre, or cave." He finished his discussion of the term on an archaeological note:

Hell: it is called in Hebrew the valley of Hennon; a place where they burnt their children in fire unto the idol Moloch; and is usurped and taken now for a place where the wicked and ungodly shall be tormented, both soul and body, after the general judgment.¹

Such examples of Tyndale's philological expertise in biblical languages merely begin to suggest the depth of his scholarship. According to my tabulations, he deals with more than fifty separate Hebrew words and phrases in his various extant works. His knowledge of Hebrew as well as Greek was, for his time, something of a phenomenon.²

Perhaps the most poignant testimony to Tyndale's dedication to biblical linguistics comes from a letter which he wrote to the Governor of Vilvorde Castle, Antoine de Berghes. As the English exile was incarcerated alone in the cold and dark vault of Vilvorde, he wrote to ask if some of his clothes might be supplied to him by

¹Tyndale, "An Exposition Upon Certain Words and Phrases of the Old Testament," P.S. vol. 1, p. 531.

²It should be noted that the evidence Henry Walter cites (Tyndale's discussion of "Mammon") as being indicative of his ability in Hebrew, is faulty. Despite Walters' extended note on the derivation of "Mammon," the passage in question is a very consistent translation of Luther. See P.S. vol. 1, pp. 68-69; see also Anthea Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestants Exiles, 1525-1535," an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1961, p. 70.

the procurer : a warm cap, a coat, an overcoat, shirts, and leggings. He wrote:

I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the procurer that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study.¹

¹This letter was found in the Archives of the Council of Brabant. A photographic reproduction appears in Robert Demaus', William Tyndale, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886) pp. 436-37. Demaus is responsible for the translation into English.

IV. Tyndale's Use of Authorities

Tyndale, of all the interpreters considered in this study, made the least use of authorities in his exegetical writings. There are two probable explanations for this distinction. One must first consider the nature and purpose of Tyndale's ministry. The one great goal in his life was to communicate the central truths of the Bible to common Englishmen. The first step in achieving such a purpose was the translation of the Scriptures into English. He explained:

...I had perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to establish the lay-people in any truth, except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text.¹

Yet an English Bible alone was not enough. The clear texts of Scripture had been tangled in a web of scholastic sophistry with "arguments of philosophy," "worldly similitudes," and "natural wisdom." The exponents of the "Old Learning" interpreted Scripture ". . .unto their own purpose, clean contrary unto the process, order, and meaning of the text."² The Bible was expounded ". . .in many senses before the unlearned lay-people, (when it hath but one simple, literal sense, whose light the owls cannot abide.)"³ To help dispel the "mists" and let the "light" dawn upon the man in the pew, Tyndale began to supplement his translations with introductions, prologues and commentaries. His first attempt at this was A Pathway into

¹Tyndale, Preface to the Five Books of Moses, P.S., vol. 1, p. 394.

²Ibid., p. 393.

³Ibid., pp. 393-94.

Holy Scripture (1525). In his closing remarks, Tyndale reiterated his purpose:

And now, because the lay and unlearned people are taught these first principles of our profession, therefore they read the scripture, and understand and delight therein.¹

In view of the fact that his writings were geared to the "lay and unlearned people" of his homeland, we would not expect Tyndale to embellish his prose with quotations from the Fathers, concerning whom his intended readers would have little cognisance. This is borne out by the fact that his introductions, prologues, and commentaries are virtually free of citation or quotation. His polemical works on the other hand, especially Obedience of a Christian Man, and Answer to Sir Thomas More, which were aimed at the ecclesiastical intelligentsia of England, make significant use of authorities.

The second cause of Tyndale's reticence to cite authorities is bound up with the issue of authority itself. He seemed to react against the position which held that the Scripture was so difficult to understand that it must first be interpreted by a Father. To accept that presupposition, Tyndale argued, was to vitiate the authority of Scripture.

That is, I must measure the meteyard by the cloth. Here be twenty cloths of diverse lengths and divers breadths: how shall I be sure of the length of a meteyard by them? I suppose, rather, I must be first sure of the length of the meteyard, and thereby measure and judge the cloths. If I must first believe the doctor, then is the doctor first true, and the truth of the scripture dependeth of his truth [sic], and so the truth of God springeth of the truth of man.²

¹ Tyndale, Pathway, P.S., vol. 1, p. 28.

² Tyndale, Obedience, P.S., vol. 1, p. 154.

Perhaps Tyndale purposefully omitted the citation of authorities to reinforce his conviction that the layman needs only the clear text of Scripture, the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and certain basic principles of interpretation, to understand the Bible.¹

The Ancient Fathers

Of all the authorities called upon to bolster his exegetical conclusions, Tyndale cited the Ancient Fathers most often. Yet even of such an august group, his use of them was sparing. The only writers who receive any appreciable attention are Augustine and Jerome.²

Augustine is classified by Tyndale as "the best, or one of the best, that ever wrote upon the scripture."³ In spite of such an accolade, Tyndale's use of Augustine is restricted to his general principles of interpretation,⁴ while his commentaries remain virtually untouched. The English exile was critical of some of Augustine's early works,⁵ noting that the Father wrote about things that he did not understand, and followed the opinions of Plato.⁶

Jerome is given even less attention than Augustine. Tyndale cited Jerome on the matters of "binding and loosing," and "clerical marriage," but in both cases the Father's contribution is only tangential to the exegetical questions involved.

¹Ibid., p. 156.

²Tyndale did refer to Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Origen, but only in passing. See P.S. vol. 1, pp. 215-16, 144; vol. 3, pp. 207, 260. See also S.L. Greenslade, The English Reformers and the Fathers of the Church (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 4.

³Tyndale, Obedience, P.S., vol. 1, p. 154.

⁴Ibid., pp. 217-18; Answer to More, P.S., vol. 3, p. 136.

⁵Ibid., p. 154.

⁶Ibid.

Tyndale referred to Origen as ". . .of all heretics. . . condemned to be the greatest,"¹ due to his promulgation of the allegorical method of interpretation. Yet while some of his works were "damned," others were to be "allowed."²

Tyndale was fond of citing the Fathers in a general way without any specific reference. On the interpretation of the controversial verse, "Upon this rock I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:18), Tyndale used a string of authorities to cast doubt on More's exegesis: "I would that he [More] would tell you how Jerome, Augustine, Bede, Origen, and other doctors expound this text."³ Tyndale spoke of Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Cyprian, and Origen, ". . .of which never one knew any authority that one bishop should have above another."⁴

Medieval Authorities

Of the early Medieval writers only Bede is cited by Tyndale on an exegetical matter. Bede's treatment of Christ's words "Upon this rock I will build my church" was pronounced a "faithful exposition,"⁵ yet Tyndale did not give the substance of the Father's exposition. The other reference to Bede is given to support Tyndale's exegesis of "binding and loosing." The text in question was the Lukan account of the ten lepers. Tyndale quoted Bede in saying:

'Of all that Christ healed, of whatsoever disease it were, he sent none unto the priest but the lepers;' and by lepers he interpreteth followers of false doctrine only, which the spiritual officers and the learned men

¹ Ibid.

² Tyndale, Answer to More, P.S., vol. 3, p. 136.

³ Tyndale, Obedience, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 217-18.

⁴ Ibid., p. 216.

⁵ Ibid., p. 218.

of the congregation ought to examine, and rebuke their learning with God's word, and to warn the congregation to beware of them. Which, if they were afterward healed by the grace of Christ, ought to come before the congregation and there openly confess their true faith. But other vices (saith he) doth God heal within, in the conscience.¹

Tyndale characteristically had little use for the Schoolmen, or for those who reinterpreted the Scholastics in later generations. They were responsible for a corruption of biblical exegesis which held sway in sixteenth century England.² He was fond of pointing out contradictions among the various authors. An excerpt from Obedience of a Christian Man reads:

. . .and forasmuch as one holdeth this doctor and another that; one followeth Duns, another St. Thomas, another Bonaventure, Alexander de Hales, Raymond, Lyre, Brygot, Dorbel, Halcot, Gorram, Trumbett, Hugo de Sancto Victore, De Monte Regio, De Nova Villa, De Media Villa, and such like out of number; so that if thou hadst but every author one book, thou couldst not pile them up in any warehouse in London, and every author is contrary unto another. In so great diversity of spirits, how shall I know who lieth, and who sayeth truth? Whereby shall I try and judge them? Verily by God's word which only is true."³

Tyndale's only concession to the possibility of finding viable exegesis among the writings of the Schoolmen, comes at the end of a biting polemic against St. Thomas Aquinas:

¹Ibid., p. 264.

²Ibid., pp. 156-58.

³Ibid., pp. 149-53. All Tyndale's references are intended to be serious. Raymond: Raymond de Pennaforti; Brygot: Saint Brigitta; Dorbel: Nicholas de Orbellis; Robert Halcot; Nicholas de Gorham; Trumbett: Antonius Trombeta; De Monte Regio: John Muller; De Nova Villa: Arnoldus de Nova Villa; De Media Villa: Richard Middleton. Tyndale's point is not that all these writers were poor interpreters, he would in fact have much in common with Nicholas of Lyre, but rather that their opinions on exegetical points were often contradictory. Latimer made a shorter but similar list of late-Medieval authors, see P.S. vol. 2, p. 319.

Then comes Thomas Aquino and he made the pope a god with his sophistry; and the pope made him a saint for his labour, and called him doctor Sanctus: for whose holiness no man may deny what he saith, save in certain places where, among so many lies, he said now and then true.¹

Contemporary Authorities

As regards his fellow reformers, one would expect that Tyndale would cite them, yet with the exception of Luther, he does not. One finds no mention of John Colet, Jacques LeFevre, Huldreich Zwingli, or Philip Melanchthon as authorities on the proper interpretation of Scripture. The only author whom Tyndale mentions in sympathetic terms is Erasmus. He was favourably disposed toward the humanist's Paraclesis, and The Paraphrase of Matthew.² In a discussion of the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary, Tyndale recommended key references in Erasmus' Annotations.³ In rebutting a criticism by More, Tyndale pointed out that Erasmus concurred with his translation of "congregation" for "ecclesia."⁴ All this is not to say that Tyndale felt Erasmus above criticism. In the Prologue to Jonah, he described Erasmian elocution in terms which belied irritation. Erasmus was one ". . . whose tongue maketh of little gnats great elephants, and lifteth up above the stars whosoever giveth him a little exhibition. ."⁵

¹ Tyndale, The Practice of the Prelates, P.S. vol. 2, p. 291.

² Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, pp. 161-62.

³ Ibid., p. 316.

⁴ Tyndale, Answer to More, P.S. vol. 3, p. 16.

⁵ Tyndale, Prophete Jonas, P.S. vol. 1, p. 395. This statement was made in response to Erasmus' praise of Bishop Tonsal.

To Tyndale, the use of an authority was never crucial to his argument. They are employed rather casually, usually without a specific reference to the author's work. Even Luther whose influence on Tyndale will be discussed below, is quoted infrequently. For Tyndale the final authority was the clear teaching of Scripture, human confirmation was not needed. He felt that the use of revered human authorities carried with it inherent dangers. His advice:

. . . get thee to God's word, and thereby try all doctrine, and against that receive nothing. . . . And when they cry, 'Fathers, Fathers,' remember that it were the fathers that blinded and robbed the whole world, and brought us into this captivity. . . . Furthermore, as they of old time are fathers to us, so shall these foul monsters¹ be fathers to them that come after us; and the hypocrites that follow us will cry of these and their doings, 'Fathers, fathers.'²

¹ The prelates of his day.

² Tyndale, Obedience, P.S. vol. 1, p. 324.

V. Tyndale and Luther

Any analysis of Tyndale as an exegete must take into account the influence of Luther, and ask the question: To what degree was Tyndale's work original? All writers acknowledge a profound Lutheran influence upon Tyndale's thought. Modern inquiry into this matter was stimulated by B.F. Westcott in 1905. He wrote:

The extent to which Tyndale silently incorporated free or even verbal translations of passages from Luther's works into his own has escaped the notice of his editors. To define it accurately would be a work of very great labour, but the result as exhibiting the points of contact and divergence in the opinion of the reformers, would be a most instructive passage in the doctrinal history of the time.¹

On the side of almost total dependence upon Luther would be L. Franklin Gruber² and Philip Hughes. The latter stated that Tyndale should not be considered an important religious thinker. "The ideas he puts forth are none of them his own, nor does he add anything of importance to their content."³ E.G. Rupp sees Tyndale as being ". . . concerned to make known the teachings of Luther in an English dress."⁴ This tendency is especially evident in Tyndale's writings which concern "justification by faith." Yet Rupp adds, ". . . it is also clear that he was nothing of the complete devotee. . . He had something virile to add on his own account."⁵

¹B.F. Westcott, English Bible, p. 146.

²L. Franklin Gruber, The First English New Testament and Luther, (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1928).

³Philip Hughes, The Reformation in England (London: Macmillan and Company, 1956), vol. 1, p. 138.

⁴E.G. Rupp, Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: The University Press, 1947) p. 49.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 51.

When one moves to the more recent works of L.J. Trinterud,¹ Jens G. Møller,² and William Clebsch,³ Tyndale's uniqueness, only hinted at by Rupp, becomes the focus of attention. These writers see Tyndale as influenced by, but departing from Luther on various (and some crucial) areas of interpretation.

Early Theological Works and Notes

In 1525 Tyndale saw his first New Testament translation printed in Cologne. The printing was interrupted however by John Cochlaeus⁴ when only ten sheets had been impressed in quarto.⁵ Tyndale, with the aid of William Roye left Cologne with the printed sheets and journeyed by ship to Worms, a city which by 1525 was under Lutheran sway. There he completed the quarto edition begun in Cologne.

¹L.J. Trinterud, "A Reappraisal of William Tyndale's Debt to Martin Luther," Church History, Vol. 31, 1962, pp. 24-45 and "The Origins of Puritanism," Church History, Vol. 20, 1951, pp. 37-57.

²Jens G. Møller, "The Beginnings of Puritan Covenant Theology," The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 14, 1963, pp. 46-67.

³W.A. Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1964).

⁴John Cochlaeus (1479-1552), known also as John Dabneck, was a Roman Catholic controversialist who wrote against Martin Luther in the bitter polemical work Commentaria de Actis et Scriptis M. Lutheri, 1517-1546 (1549). He served as a canon at Mainz, Meissen, and Breslau. See F.L. Cross, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1974) p. 308.

⁵A good description of the intrigues of Cochlaeus is given by Edward Arber ed. The First Printed English New Testament (London: Bloomsbury, 1871). See also Westcott English Bible, pp. 29-31.

Unfortunately, there is no complete extant copy of this work. In 1836, however, Thomas Rodd of London found a fragment of Matthew's Gospel of thirty-one leaves, bound in a quarto tract of Oecolampadius. Investigation proved this to be a copy of Tyndale's abortive Cologne New Testament. This find is generally referred to as the "Cologne fragment." It is instructive for this study in that it contains the first examples of Tyndale's annotations on the text of Matthew as well as a prologue to the Gospel.

Tyndale's "Prologge" was for the most part based on Luther's "Vorrhede" to the September 1522 edition of Neue Testament Deutsch. Tyndale closely followed Luther's "Vorrhede" for four and one-half paragraphs,¹ omitting one and one-half paragraphs at the beginning, and six paragraphs at the end. A parallel presentation of the two works demonstrates Tyndale's dependance upon Luther:

Denn Euangelion ist eyn
kriechisch wortt, vnd heyst auff
deutsch, gute botschafft,
gute meher, gutte newzeytung,
gutt geschrey, dauon man
singet, saget vnd frolich
ist, gleych als do David
den grossen Goliath vberwand.²

Euangelio (that we cal the
Gospel) is a greke worde/ and
signyfyth good/ mery/ glad and
ioyfull tydings/ that maketh
a mannes hert glad/ and maketh
hym synge/ daunce and leepe
for ioeye, as when Davyd had
kylled Golyath the giant.³

After leaving Luther's "Vorrhede," Tyndale continued with his prologue for seventeen paragraphs of original work. In this section he expounds upon: the Law, the Gospel, Moses, Christ, Nature, Grace,

¹ Tyndale's translation of Luther's work begins with the paragraph on the nature of the Old Testament and ceases at the end of the paragraph dealing with the promise to Abraham. See Arber, The First Printed New Testament, p. 2.

² Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, p. 2.

³ Arber, The First Printed New Testament, p. 2.

and the dynamics of working and believing. Though his own work, this section shows signs of Lutheran influence. In almost every paragraph one finds the Lutheran contrast between the Law and the Gospel.

Tyndale showed independence in what he chose not to include of Luther's work. One finds no reference to Luther's ranking of New Testament books in the "Prologge," nor to the German's famous remark:

Darumb ist sanct Iacobs Epistel eyn rechte stroern
Epistel gegen sie, denn sie doch keyn Euangelisch art an
yhr hat, Doch dauon weytter ynn andern vorrheden.¹

The marginal notes to the "Cologne fragment" also bear Luther's imprint. Almost two-thirds of the ninety-two notes are borrowed from the annotations in Das Neue Testament Deutsch (1522).² Many of these glosses are direct translations. The note on Matthew 1:6 explaining the lineage of Christ is a typical example:

S. Mattheus lesset ettlich
gelid aussen, vnnd furet Christus
geschlecht von Solomon nach dem
gesetz, aber Sanc. Lucas furet
es nach der natur vonn Nathan
Solomonis bruder. Denn das
gesetz nennet auch die kinder,
so von brudern auss nachgelas-
senem weyb geporn sind. Deuter.
25³.

Saynct mathew leueth out
certeyne generacions/ and des-
cribeth Christes lineage from
solomo/ after the lawe of
Moses/ but Lucas describeth it
accordyng to nature/fro nathan
solomos brother. For the lawe
calleth them a mannes childre
which his broder begatt of his
wyfe lefte behynde hym
after his dethe. deu. XXV. C⁴

Luther often clarified and amplified key terms in the text, many of which Tyndale included in his margin. One such note on Matthew 1:19 deals with the term "defame" as Tyndale translated it:

¹Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band .6, p. 10. Luther felt the "highest" books in the New Testament were John's Gospel, I John, Paul's epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and Peter's first epistle.

²Of the ninety-two notes, fifty-seven are nearly literal translations of Luther's work. At least three are based primarily upon Luther. See Gruber, The First English New Testament and Luther, p. 73, and A. Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles, 1525-1535," p. 34.

³Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, p. 14.

⁴Arber, The First Printed New Testament, p. 17.

(Rugen et ce.)

Das ist er wolt sie nicht zu
schanden machen fur den leuten,
als er wol macht hatte nach
dem gesetze, vnd rumbt also
Sanct. Matth. Iosephs
fromkeyt das er sich auch
seynes rechten vmb liebe
willen vertzigen hatt.¹

Defame

That is he wolde not put her
to ope shame/ as he wel might
haue done bi the lawe. Also Mathew
reioywith of the goodnes of
ioseph/ which for loves sake dyd
remyt of his ryght.²

A similar note offers an onomatopoetic explanation of a term in
Matthew 5:22:

(Racha)

Racha ist das rauch
scharren ym halss vnd
begreyffet alle zornige
zeychen.³

Rache is the whoarce soude
in the throate/ & betokeneth
all sygnes of wrath.⁴

Luther occasionally offered historical aids to the reader, which
Tyndale passed along as well.

(vier furst)

Iudea mitt yhr zu gehor
was in vier herschafften teylt,
da her man die hern tetrarchas, das
ist vierfursten nennet.⁵

Tetrarcha/ ys he that hath
rule over the fourth parte
of a realme. Iury with her
pertenauce was the deuided
ito iiij lordshippes.⁶

In some cases Tyndale used the Lutheran gloss, and then
amplified it further. On Christ's pronouncement "Thou art Peter. . .",
Luther writes:

¹Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, p. 16.

²Arber, The First Printed English New Testament, p. 18.

³Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, p. 28.

⁴Arber, The First Printed English New Testament, p. 24.

⁵Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, p. 66.

⁶Arber, The First Printed English New Testament, p. 45.

(Petrus) Cepha Syrisch, Petros krieichisch heyst auff deutsch eyn fels, vnd alle Christen sind petri vmb der bekentnis willen, die hie. Petrus thut, wilche ist der fels, darauff Petrus vnd alle petri bawet sind gemeyn ist die bekentnis also auch der name.¹

Tyndale's note reads:

Peter i the greke/ sygnieth a stoone i eglysshe. This confessio is the rocke. Nowe is simo bariona/ or simo ionas some/ called Peter/ because of his cofessio. Whosoeuer the this wyse cofesseth of Christe/ the same is called Peter. Nowe is this cofession coe too all that are true christen. . . . Rede bede/ auste and hiero/ of the manner of lowsinge & bynding and note how hiero checketh the presumcio of the pharises i his tyme/ which yet had nott so mostrous iterpretacions as oure new goddes haue feyned/Rede erasmus anotacions. Hyt was noot for nought that Christ badd beware of the leven of the pharises.²

Tyndale did make some original comments on the text. These were however generally explanatory in nature rather than interpretative. On Matthew 5:18 for example, he touched on the term "iota": "Iott. Is as moche too saie as the leest lerter for so is the leest lerter that the grekes or the hebrues haue/ called."³ In reference to the birth of Christ being in Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Tyndale wrote: "Iury is the lande. Iuda is the trybe or kynred that dwelt there in."⁴

Tyndale apparently remained at Worms for some time, and in 1526 published A compendious introduccion/ prologe or preface vn to the pistle off Paul to the Romayns. Only one copy of this work is now known to be extant: in the Bodleian Library. This

¹ Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band .6, p. 76.

² Arber, The First Printed English New Testament, p. 61.

³ Ibid., p. 24.

⁴ Ibid., p. 19. For further examples see Matthew 1:16, 1:21, 1:23, 4:9, 6:6, 6:22, and 6:30.

introduction to Romans is largely a paraphrastic translation of Luther's "Vorrhede auff die Epistel Sanct Paulus zu den Romern" (1522), a Latin version of which was published in 1523 under the title: "Praefatio methodica totius Scripturae in epistola ad Romanos, e vernacula Martini Lutheri in Latinum versa."¹ Tyndale made use of virtually the whole of Luther's work in his "compendious introduccion."² In some cases he translates from the German directly, as in discussing true freedom from the law in Romans chapter six:

Dasselb aber ist die rechte freyheydt von der sunden vnd vom gesetz, von wilcher er bis ans ende dises Capitels schreybt, das es sey eyn freyheydt nur guttis zu thun mit lust, vnd wol leben on zwang des gesetzts, Darumb ist dise freyheydt eyn geystliche freyheydt, die nicht das gesetzte affhebt, sondern dar reicht, was vom gesetz gefodert wirt, nemlich, lust vnd lieb, damit das gesetz gestillet wirt....³

This ys the ryght fredome and liberte from sinne and from the lawe/ where of he wryteth vn to the ende off this chapter/ that yt ys a fredome to doo good only with luste/ and to lyve well with oute compulcion of the lawe. Wherefore this fredome ys a spiritual fredom/ which destroyeth not the lawe/ but ministreth that which the lawe requireth/ and wherewyth the lawe ys fulfilled/ that ys to understand/ luste and love wherewith the lawe ys styllled. . . .⁴

Tyndale also amplified Luther in numerous places. These additions amount to about one quarter of the whole work. Although remaining Lutheran in theological content, they differ from the Wittenberg reformer in style. An example of Tyndale's use of Luther as a springboard is seen in his comments on Romans chapter four.

¹Henry Walter ed. Doctrinal Treatises, P.S. vol. 1, p. 483. Justus Jonas made the translation into Latin.

²Westcott has made a good case for the fact that Tyndale used both the German and the Latin text for his translation depending on which version better suited his purposes. B.F. Westcott, English Bible, pp. 147-48. See also A. Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles. 1525-1535," pp. 41-47.

³Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 7, pp.18 and 20.

⁴Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle to the Romans, P.S. vol. 1, p. 501.

He follows Luther closely in writing:

Herewith St. Paul now establisheth his doctrine of faith, rehearsed afore in chapter iii., and bringeth also the testimony of David, Psalm xxxii., which calleth a man blessed, not of works, but in that his sin is not reckoned, and in that faith is imputed for righteousness, although he abide not afterward without good works, when he is once justified.¹

At this point Tyndale begins a lengthy amplification:

For we are justified, and receive the Spirit, for to do good works; neither were it otherwise possible to do good works, except we first had the Spirit.

For how is it possible to do anything well in the sight of God, while we are yet in captivity and bondage under the devil, and the devil possesseth us altogether, and holdeth our hearts, so that we cannot once consent unto the will of God. No man therefore can prevent the Spirit in doing good. The Spirit must first come, and wake him out of his sleep with the thunder of the law, and fear him, and shew him his miserable estate and wretchedness; and make him abhor and hate himself, and desire to help; and then comfort him again with the pleasant rain of the gospel.²

Tyndale develops and illustrates Luther's final thought more fully, while remaining solidly Lutheran in his doctrinal emphasis. This is seen even more clearly in a discussion of the tension between the law and sin in Romans chapter seven. Tyndale follows Luther in saying:

So seest thou that a man must have some other thing, yea, and a greater and a more mighty thing than the law, to make him righteous and safe. They that understand not the law on this issue are blind, and go to work presumptuously, supposing to satisfy the law with works. For they know not that the law requireth a free, a willing, a lusty, and a loving heart. Therefore they see not Moses right in the face; the vail hangeth

¹Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle to the Romans, P.S. vol. 1, p. 497.

²Ibid.

between, and hideth his face, so that they cannot behold the glory of his countenance, how that the law is spiritual, and requireth the heart.¹

At this point Tyndale leaves Luther to amplify further:

I may of mine own strength refrain, but to love him with all mine heart, and to put away wrath clean out of my mind, can I not of my own strength. I may refuse money of mine own strength; but to put away love unto riches out of mine heart, I can not do of mine own strength. To abstain from adultery, as concerning the outward deed, I can do of mine own strength; but not to desire in mine heart is as impossible unto me as if to choose whether I will hunger or thirst: and yet so the law requireth. Wherefore of a man's own strength is the law never fulfilled; we must have thereunto God's favour and his Spirit, purchased by Christ's blood.²

We see again that Tyndale's addition is merely an illustration and application of Luther's thought. Nothing substantially new is added in terms of content.

Attached to the Prologue to Romans was "A Treatise (to fill vpp the leefte with all of the pater noster)." This small document was not included in Daye's folio edition, nor in Walter's, due to the fact that it was not then known to be extant. Mozley writing in 1937 does recognize it. Modern scholarship has traced its origin to Luther's Auslegung deutsch des Vater unnser fuer dye einfeltigen leyen (1519).³ At the end of this work there appears a "kurtz begreiff und ordenung aller vorgeschrieben."⁴ This "kurtz begreiff" is the original basis for Tyndale's work. Tyndale does make additions to Luther's document, but they are few in number, and for the most part amplifications.

¹Ibid., p. 503. See Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, pp. 20 and 22.

²Ibid.

³Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 2, pp. 80-130.

⁴Ibid., p. 128.

In 1528 Tyndale published The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, the first of many works carrying the fictitious imprint Hans Luft of Marburg. The actual printer was probably Johannes Hoochstraten of Antwerp.¹

The Parable of the Wicked Mammon is based upon Luther's published sermon "Eyn Sermon von dem unrechten Mammon, Lu. XVI."² Tyndale both paraphrased and translated Luther's work as he saw fit. In simplest terms the treatise is a discussion of the problem of faith and works as seen in the context of the parable of the "unjust steward." In his sermon Luther made three central points: 1) It is faith alone which justifies; 2) Genuine faith is always followed by good works; and 3) Christians are welcomed in heaven by God, not the saints. Tyndale expanded almost every paragraph of Luther's sermon, often to twice the original length.³ The purpose of the additions was once again to illustrate and apply Luther's ideas, and to discuss the dynamics of faith upon the personality of the believer. This evolving from Luther's original is well illustrated in a passage where the two writers discuss false versus true faith:

¹A. Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles, 1525-1535," p. 59.

²Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 10, part 3, pp. 283-293.

³Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles, 1525-1535," p. 60. The expanded Lutheran sermon runs from pages 45-70; Tyndale's original work from pages 71-126, in the Parker Society edition.

Es seyndt ettliche, die das Euangelion und vom glawben hören odder lessen und fallen schwindt drauff, und heyssen das glawben das sie dencken.

Sie dencken aber nicht weytter denn glawbe sey eynd ding, das ynn yhrer macht stehe tzu haben oder nicht zu haben, als eynd ander naturlich menschlich werck.

Darumb wenn sie ynn yhrem hertzen eynd gedancken tzu wege bringen, der do spricht: warlich die lere ist recht, und ich glawbs es sey also, so baldt meynen sie, der glawb sey da.¹

Many there are, which when they hear or read of faith, at once consent thereunto, and have a certain imagination or opinion of faith. When a man telleth a story or a thing done in a strange land, that pertaineth not to them at all; which yet they believe and tell as a true thing: and this imagination, or opinion they call faith. They think no farther than that faith is a thing which standeth in their own power to have, as to do natural works which men work;

but they feel no manner working of the Spirit, neither the terrible sentence of the law, the fearful judgment of God, the horrible damnation and captivity under Satan. Therefore, as soon as they have their opinion or imagination in their hearts, that saith, Verily this doctrine seemeth true, I believe it is even so; then they think that the right faith is there.²

One sees in this passage that Tyndale first illustrates Luther's point, and then amplifies with his stress on the subjective feelings involved with the doctrinal issue.

In discussing proper faith, Tyndale followed Luther in stating that it is not of man's making, but rather a gift of God. To support this statement Luther quoted Romans 5:5; while Tyndale used Ephesians 2:8-9 to the same purpose. Tyndale then followed Luther almost word for word in saying:

¹ Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 10, part 3, p. 285.

² Tyndale, Mammon, P.S. vol. 1, pp. 52-53.

Therefore it [faith] is mighty in operation, full of virtue, and ever working; which also reneweth a man, and begetteth him afresh, altereth him, changeth him, and turneth him altogether into a new nature and conversation.¹

Tyndale then continued on to illustrate this in typical fashion:

... it setteth the soul at liberty, and maketh her free to follow the will of God, and doth to the soul even as health doth unto the body, after that a man is pined and wasted away with a long soking disease; the legs cannot bear him, he cannot lift up his hands to help himself, his taste is corrupt, sugar is bitter in his mouth, his stomach abhorreth, longing after slibbersauce and swash at which a whole stomach is ready to cast his gorge. When health cometh, she changeth and altereth him clean....²

This new capacity to please God is a main emphasis of Tyndale's expanded paragraphs. What man needed, he felt, was a genuine rebirth, which would naturally result in a totally new outlook: new desires, and a new capacity to love God and His commands.

To this enlargement of Luther's sermon, Tyndale added a section of his own, nearly twice its length. His purpose in this addition was to interpret correctly biblical texts which might seem to suggest that good works are necessary for salvation. He dealt with these passages by suggesting that such works were urged because they testify to a man's salvation, in showing the righteousness already his by faith.

In this first group of works, written between 1525 and 1528, Tyndale was highly dependent upon Luther in his exegesis. It seems that Tyndale's purpose at this point in his development was to make Luther clear to the English reader, through explanation and amplification. He continually introduced images and analogies to convey the biblical message.

¹Ibid.

²Tyndale, Mammon, P.S. vol. 1., p. 54.

Later Expository Works

In 1530 Tyndale published prologues to the five books of Moses along with his translation of the Pentateuch.¹ It is certain that Tyndale was aware of Luther's general "Vorrede" to Das Alte Testament deutsch (1523);² yet unlike his New Testament prologues, these were original compositions.

On careful inspection one can find traces of Luther's words, but such are the exception rather than the rule as in previous works. Hints of Luther's influence are seen in Tyndale's general description of the book of Numbers: "In the second and third book they received the law; and in this fourth they begin to work and to practice."³ Luther's words on the same book were: "Im vierden buch ... hebt sich das werck vnd vbung an...."⁴ In the first paragraph of his prologue to Deuteronomy, Tyndale described the book as ". . .easy also and light, and a very pure Gospel, that is to wit, a preaching of faith and love. . . ."⁵ Luther had said: "Dise verklerung ym funfften buch, helt eygentlich nicht anders ynnen, denn den glawben zu Gott vnd die liebe zum nehisten."⁶

¹There is some evidence that the five books were circulated separately, each prefixed by its own title page. See A. Hume, A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles, 1525-1535, p. 390.

²Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 8, pp. 10-32..

³Tyndale, The Prologue Upon the Book of Numbers, P.S. vol. 1, p. 429. italics mine.

⁴Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 8, p.14.

⁵Tyndale, The Prologue Upon the Book of Deuteronomy, P.S. vol. 1, p. 441.

⁶Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 8, p.14.

We find in Tyndale's prologues to the Pentateuch less of a dependence upon Luther than in previous works. Although he makes no appreciable theological movement away from his German mentor, the greater part of Tyndale's introductions was his own work. This reflects a growing self-confidence on Tyndale's part as his interpretative skills matured.

In 1533 Tyndale produced An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew.¹ These three chapters, comprising Matthew's account of the "Sermon on the Mount," were according to Tyndale, ". . . the key and door to the scripture. . . ."² There is good evidence that Tyndale was stimulated to do this work by Luther's, Das fünffte, Sechste, und Siebend Capitel S. Matthei gepredigt und ausgeleget,³ published in 1532.

Rupp states that the work of Tyndale is merely a "translation" of Luther's sermons.⁴ Westcott was more cautious, and saw some "coincidences" between Tyndale and Luther in their respective works, which, though few in number, were "worthy of notice."⁵ Hume is in general agreement with Westcott saying that ". . . Tyndale's version cannot be dismissed as a mere translation, because each proposition is heightened by the addition of an image or example."⁶

¹ Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 2, pp.1-132.

² Ibid., p. 1.

³ Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 32, p. 413.

⁴ E.G. Rupp, The English Protestant Tradition, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1947), p. 51.

⁵ Westcott, English Bible, p. 148.

⁶ A. Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles 1525-1535," p. 425.

Examples of near literal translations are few. One such appears in Matthew's use of the term "righteousness" (Matthew 5:6) which the two writers treated as follows:

Gerechtigkeith mus an
diesem ort nicht heissen
die Christliche heubt
gerechtigkeith, dadurch die
person frum und angensem
wird fur Gott. . . .Diese
acht stuck nichts anders sind
Denn eine lere von den fruchten
und gutten wercken eines
Christen. . . .¹

Righteousness in this place
is not taken for the principal
righteousness of a Christian man,
through which a person is good
and accepted before God. For
these eight points are but doctrine
of the fruits and works of a
Christian man.²

Again, when Luther commented upon the "Lord's Prayer" and the Christian's responsibility to pray for his neighbour, Tyndale followed him very closely:

Denn gleich wie die
notdurfft dieses lebens
foddert das wir dem nehesten
guts thun und uns seiner not
annemen (Denn darumb leben wir
auff erden bey einander, das
einer dem andern diene und
helffe) Also weil wir teglich
inn allerley fahr und not
inn diesem leben stecken, die
wir nicht umbgehen noch
wenden können, so müssen wir
auch imerdar zu Gott ruffen
und hülffe suchen beyde fur
uns und iderman.³

For as it is a christian man's
part to help his neighbour,
and to bear with him when he is
overcharged, and to suffer with
him, and to stand one by another,
as long as we live here on this
earth; even so, because we be in
such peril and cumbrance that we
cannot rid ourselves out, we must
daily and hourly cry to God for
aid and succour, as well for
our neighbours as for ourselves.⁴

More often Tyndale loosely borrowed from Luther. A comparison of both men on the seventh beatitude furnishes a good example:

¹ Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 32, -p. 330.

² Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 2, p. 22.

³ Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 32, p. 317.

⁴ Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 2, p.

...Wer ein Christ und
Gottes kind sein wil,
nicht allein kein krieg und
unfried anfahe, sondern zum
fride helffe und rate wo
er imer kan, ob auch gleich
recht und ursachen gnug zu
kriegen weren, ist gnug, wenn
man alles versucht und
nichts helfen wil, das man
ein notwere thun mus land
und leute zu schutzen.¹

...Princes, if they will be
God's children, must not only
give no cause of war, nor begin any;
but also (though he have a just
cause) suffer himself to be
entreated, if he that gave the
cause repent, and must also seek
always of peace, before he fight.
Howbeit when all is sought, and
nothing will help, then he
ought, and is bound, to
defend his land and subjects.²

On the interpretation of Christ's words, "Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth." Tyndale followed Luther, but then
amplified each thought with an image or example:

Denn es kan nicht feilen,
es wird zuweilen dein nachbar
sich an dir vergreifen und
zuviel thun entweder aus
versehen odder auch aus
mutwillen. Ists versehen, so
machstus deinet halben nicht
gut, das du nichts wilt noch
kanst vertragen; Ists aber
mutwillen, so machestu ihn nur
erger, das du feindlich
scharrest und pochest.³

It is impossible to dwell in any
place where no displeasure should
be done thee. If it be done
unwillingly, as when they
neighbour's beast break into the
corn by some chance against his will,
then it is reason that thou be soft
and forgive. If it be done of
malice and self-will, then with
revenging thou dost but, with
pottering in the fire, make the
flame greater, and givest an occasion
of more evil to be done thee.⁴

One sees in this work a familiar pattern of building upon
Luther with analogy and illustration. Yet Tyndale demonstrates
more confidence and originality. In this work and his prologues to
the Pentateuch, Tyndale breaks free from Luther theologically and
begins to formulate his theology of a conditional covenant which shall
be treated at length below.

¹Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 32, p. 330.

²Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 2, p. 26.

³Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 32, p. 317.

⁴Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 2, p. 21.

By far the highest degree of dependence upon Luther is evident in Tyndale's prologues to the various New Testament books published in the revised edition of 1534. In the new edition, Tyndale's prologue to the 1525 prototype, as well as the "Epistle to the Reader," were both dropped. A new and original general prologue was added as well as an introduction entitled, "William Tyndale Yet Once More to the Christian Reader."

The prologues to the Gospels are relatively short, and since Luther had no special introduction, one can assume that Tyndale's work was original. He does however seem to rank the books of the New Testament in Lutheran style.¹

Tyndale did not write a prologue for the Acts of the Apostles or for John's Revelation, though Luther had both. Most of the other prologues conform to Luther's in structure and content. The prologues to II Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, I and II Peter, I, II, III John follow Luther most literally. A selection from the "Prologue to Philippians" furnishes a good example of the similarity between the two works:

In diser Epistel lobt vnd
ermanet sanct Paulus die
Philipper, das sie bleyben
vnd fort faren sollen ym
rechten glawben, vnd zu-
nehmen ynn der liebe.

Paul praiseth the Philippians,
and exhorteth them to stand fast
in the true faith, and to increase
in love.

¹ See Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Gospel of St. Matthew, P.S. vol. 1, p. 477; and Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 4, p. 10.

Die weyl aber dem glawben all-
tzeyt schaden thun die falschen
Apostel, vnd werck lerer,
warnet er sie fur den selben,
vnd zeygt yhn an, mancherley
prediger, ettliche gut, etliche
bose, auch sich selbs und seyne
iunger Timotheon und Epaphroditon...¹

And because that false
prophets study always to impugn
and destroy the true faith, he
warneth them of such work-
learners or teachers of works...

and praiseth Epaphroditus.²

One notes a slight compression in Tyndale's version. This is characteristic of Tyndale's use of Luther's works in these prologues.

Tyndale departs from Luther most clearly in his prologues to Hebrews, James, and Jude, (the books which Luther deemed second best) chiefly on the issues of the merit and authority of these epistles. In discussing Hebrews, Luther was adamant that it was not of Pauline authorship.³ Tyndale on the other hand, after reviewing Luther's arguments stated: "Now whether it were Paul's or no, I say not, but permit it to other men's judgments, neither think it to be an article of any man's faith. . . ." ⁴ Tyndale envisaged the author of Hebrews as a faithful servant of Christ who taught the same doctrine as Timothy and Paul. He was either an apostle or a close associate of an apostle living in the first century.⁵

On the more problematical passages of Hebrews, Luther wrote;

Aber das hatt sie eyn harten knotten, das sie am
6. vnnd 10. cap. stracks verneynet vnnd versagt die
pus den sundern noch der tauffe, vnd am 12. spricht, Esau
hab puss gesucht, vnnd doch nicht funden, Wilchs
widder alle Euangeli vnd Epistel Sanct Pauli ist, Unnd

¹ Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 7, p.210.

² Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, P.S. vol. 1, p. 514.

³ Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 7, p.344.

⁴ Tyndale, A Prologue Upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, P.S. vol. 1, p. 521.

⁵ Ibid., p. 524.

wie wol man mag eyn glos drauff machen, so lauten doch die wort so klar, das ich nit weys, obs gnug sey, Mich dunckt, es sey ein Epistel von vielen stucken zusammen gesetz, vnd nicht eynerley ordenlich handele.¹

Tyndale gives these "exegetical stumbling blocks" far more attention than Luther, quoting the three above mentioned passages in full and writing:

Which texts. . . sound, that if a man sin any more often after he is once baptized, he can be no more forgiven; and that is clean contrary to all the scripture. . . .

Unto which I answer, If we should deny this epistle for those tests' sakes, so should we deny first Matthew (12). . . and then Mark (3) ... thirdly Luke, which saith there shall be no remission of sins to him that blasphemeth the Spirit of God.²

Thus Tyndale reconciles these difficulties in Hebrews by seeing them as references to the "unpardonable sin," the "sin unto death," i.e. blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

In their concluding remarks on Hebrews, both men concur in assessing the weakness of the epistle as its failure to "lay the ground of faith." While Luther did find some value in the book, Tyndale was far more positive and explicit in extolling its strengths.

Und ob er wol nicht den grund legt des glawbens, wie er selbs zeuget cap.6... So bawet er doch seyn drauff, golt, sylber, edelsteyne... Derhalben vns nicht hyndern sol, ob villeicht etwas holtz, stro odder hew, mit vnter gemenget werde sondern solche feyne lere mit allen ehren auffnemen,

And now therefore,...though this epistle (as it saith in the sixth) lay not the ground of faith in Christ, yet it buildeth cunningly thereon pure gold, silver, and precious stones.... Moreover, there is no work in all the scripture that so plainly declareth the meanings and significations of the sacrifices

¹Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 7, p. 344.

²Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, P.S. vol. 1, pp. 521-522.

On das man sie den Apostolischen
Epistellen nit aller dinge
gleychen mag.¹

ceremonies, and figures of the
old Testament, as this epistle.
...and seeing the epistle
agreeth to all the rest of
scripture (if it be indifferently
looked on), why should it not
be authority, and taken for
holy scripture?²

On James and Jude Tyndale followed a pattern similar to his
handling of Hebrews. Luther objected of James, "...das sie stracks
widder Sanct Paulon vmnd alle ander schrift, den wercken die
rechtfertigung gibt. . . ."³ Tyndale reconciles James' doctrine
with Paul in saying:

...Where he saith in the second chapter, 'Faith
without deeds is dead in itself,' he meaneth...that faith, which
hath no good deeds following, is a false faith, and not
the faith that justifieth, or receiveth forgiveness
of sins. For God promiseth them only forgiveness
of their sins, which turn to God to keep his laws.⁴

To deal with the statement in James that "works justify," Tyndale
argued that faith justifies a sinner with God, whereas works justify
him before the world: "... That is to say, faith, wherewith he was
righteous before the world; and wherein the world perceived that he
believed in God, loved and feared God."⁵ Tyndale concluded that

¹Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 7, p. 344.

²Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews,
P.S. vol. 1, p. 524.

³Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 7, p. 384.

⁴Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle of St. James, P.S. vol. 1,
p. 525.

⁵Ibid., p. 526.

James "ought to be taken as scripture" because: 1) It did not set up man's doctrine, but cried out to keep the law of God; 2) It taught that love was the means whereby the law might be fulfilled; and 3) It has nothing which is not agreeable with the rest of Scripture.¹

On the matter of Jude, Tyndale once again reviewed Luther's criticisms of it and concluded: ". . . Yet seeing the matter is so godly and agreeing to other places of holy scripture, I see not but that it ought to have the authority of holy scripture."²

We have seen in the 1534 prologues both an almost slavish translation of Luther when Tyndale was in agreement with him, and the freedom to depart from the German reformer on key issues. Tyndale was not content in merely "Englising" Luther. On the issues of the canonicity and authority of Hebrews, James, and Jude he was willing to stand his ground, despite the doubts of "great learned men."

Turning to the marginal notes in the New Testament of 1534, we find that unlike the notes to the "Cologne fragment" the revised glosses are for the most part original. Of the 227 notes,³ only nine are directly traceable to Luther, and these are confined to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John.⁴

Tyndale's comment on Christ's words in John 6:27 shows a definite Lutheran influence:

¹Ibid., p. 525.

²Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Epistle of Jude, P.S. vol. 1, p. 531.

³The number 227 is a tabulation of significant comments, explanations, and interpretations. Cross-references, and one-word notes were not included.

⁴The passages include: Matthew 1:1; 1:19; 2:18; 3:15; 11:11; Luke 1:78; 17:10; John 1:16; 6:27. The notes are included in Francis Fry, A Bibliographical Description of the Editions of the New Testament, (London: Henry Sotheran and Co., 1878).

(versigelt) Das ist, mit dem heyligen geyst begabt, das wer die speys isset (wie folgt) auch den geyst entsehet vnd leben soll.¹

(Sealed) that is: he hath put his mark of the Holy Ghost on him which testifieth with miracles what he is.²

And even in the Gospels Tyndale demonstrates his independence.

Matthew 13:12 reads: "For to him who has will more be given, . . . but from him who has not, even what he had will be taken away."

Luther wrote of this verse: "Wo das wort gottis verstanden wirt, da mehret es sich vnd bessert den menschen, wo es aber nicht verstanden wirt, da nympt es ab vnnnd ergert den menschen."³

Tyndale's interpretation focuses upon the love for God's word, rather than its understanding: "A covenant to them that love the word to further it, that they shall increase therein, and another that they that love it not shall lose it again, and wax blind."⁴

The 1534 notes show a greater sophistication over against their 1524 counterparts. There are three general categories of notes:

1) Interpretative; 2) Explanatory; and 3) Devotional. Over half of the glosses fall into the first two categories.

In seeking to correctly assess Tyndale's dependence upon Luther in exegesis, we have focused attention upon the writings which show positive signs of Lutheran influence. The degree of influence in these works is obviously quite high. It must be remembered however

¹Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, p. 348.

²Fry, A Bibliographic Description, p.48.

³Luther, Deutsche Bibel, Weimar Text, band 6, p. 60.

⁴Fry, A Bibliographic Description, p. 47.

that Tyndale produced a number of significant pieces which were original, and which do contain exegetical material.¹

Tyndale's earliest works show the most borrowing. In many cases he merely translated or paraphrased Luther, adding illustrative material with which to apply a given teaching to the English reader.² The theological content of these early writings remained solidly Lutheran.

With his later works, the more mature and linguistically sophisticated Tyndale began to write with greater independence. His prologues to the Pentateuch were, with but minor exceptions, his own work. Although the same cannot be said for the majority of the introductions included in his New Testament of 1534, Tyndale did depart from Luther on some significant points. The same edition carried marginal notes most of which were presumably original.

¹The original compositions include: Obedience of a Christian Man (1528); Practice of the Prelates (1530); The Prophete Jonas (1531); Answere unto Sir T. More's Dialogues (1531); Exposition upon the fyrst epistle of seynt Jhon (1531); and A Brief Description of the Sacraments (1535-36).

²The practice of using whole sections of an author's work without acknowledging the source was not uncommon in sixteenth century Europe. The anonymous Italian treatise Trattato utilissimo del beneficio de Giesu Christo crocifisso, verso i Christiani (Venice: Bernardinum de Bindonis, 1543), attributed by modern scholarship to an obscure Benedictine monk, Don Benedetto, silently incorporated selected passages from the 1539 edition of Calvin's Institutes. See J. Tedeschi, ed., Italian Reformation Studies in Honour of Laelius Socinus (Firenze: Casa Editrice Le Monnier, 1965) pp. 23-94; esp. pp. 36-7. In the English Reformation, John Bradford's tract "The Restoration of All Things," drew heavily upon Martin Bucer's Commentary on Romans (Strassburg: 1536), yet Bradford was content to only hint at the source of his work in writing, "This is my cogitation in this matter, and not mine only, but the cogitation of one who was my father in the Lord...." P.S. vol. 2, pp. 355-56. At least in the case of Bradford one cannot attribute this reticence to give due credit to the original author to the supposition that such an acknowledgment would prejudice the reader against the work in advance. Truth, especially biblical truth, was not owned exclusively by the first writer who put it into print. We must be careful not to read our modern notions of copyright and plagiarism back into the sixteenth century.

Thus we can concur with Rupp's conclusion that Tyndale was ". . . concerned to make known the teaching of Luther in an English dress," yet also adding something "virile" of his own.¹ Yet the greatest example of Tyndale's independence as an exegete was not touched upon by Professor Rupp. In the works published after 1530 Tyndale developed the doctrine of a conditional covenant. This doctrine was a significant influence on his hermeneutical system.

¹E.G. Rupp, Studies in The Making of The English Protestant Tradition, p. 51.

Tyndale's Law-Covenant Theology

It is not the purpose of this study to investigate the doctrinal positions of the writers under consideration, unless the doctrine bears directly upon the issue of exegesis. In the case of Tyndale, two doctrinal themes emerge continually in his later exegesis, namely, that love is a means of fulfilling God's moral law; and that God deals with His creatures on the basis of conditional covenants. These two interrelated doctrinal foci become the integrating principles for Tyndale's interpretation of Scripture.

The law

Tyndale's doctrine of law can be roughly divided into two phases of development. In the first phase, which includes his writings in the 1520's, Tyndale was clearly following the lead of Luther. As the third decade began, however, we find a new emphasis taking hold in his works, namely, the central importance of loving the law of God. This second stage of development leads Tyndale away from Luther theologically and this directly affects his exegesis.

Both men begin with the concept that there is a "natural law." In simplest terms this law is God's eternal will for man. This law is infused into every man causing a moral awareness. As Luther wrote:

There is thus a single law, effective in all ages and known to all men because it is written in everyone's heart. From the beginning to the end no one can excuse himself [for] the Spirit never stops speaking this law in the hearts of all men.¹

¹ Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 27, p. 355.

For Tyndale, the knowledge that God ". . . ought to be believed, trusted and loved with all a man's heart, soul, mind, and strength . . .," and that a man should love his neighbour as himself, was a "law of nature" which pertained to "all nations."¹ This law preceded Moses and would have been binding upon man even if the Pentateuch had never been written.² The Mosaic law was given by God only to remind man of the eternal law which had been darkened by sin.

The Law given on Mount Sinai contained three aspects, according to Tyndale. There were the "ceremonial laws," which were ". . . signs that put men in remembrance. . . ." of God's past benefits, future promises, and propitiated wrath.³ This aspect of the law was no longer applicable to Christians, because all such ceremonies ceased ". . . as soon as Christ had offered up the sacrifice of his body and blood for us."⁴ A second element of the law was that which pertained to penalty or punishment within society, or civil law. Such codes as expressed in the Bible, wrote Tyndale, ". . . were given unto the Jews only, and we heathen or gentiles are not bound unto them . . ."⁴ The third part of the law, was that which transcends both Old and New Testaments, the moral law.

The purpose of God's moral law was expressed by Tyndale in the Prologue to the New Testament of 1525 in distinctly Lutheran terms:

¹ Tyndale, The Practice of the Prelates, P.S. vol. 2, p. 324.

² Tyndale, The New Testament (1534), reprint edition edited by N.H. Wallis (Cambridge: The University Press, 1938) p. 9.

³ Tyndale, The Practice of the Prelates, P.S. vol. 2., p. 324.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

The law was given to bring us unto the knowledge of ourselves. . . The law condemneth us and all our deeds.... For it killeth our consciences, and driveth us to desperation; inasmuch as it requireth of us that which is impossible for us to do.... It requireth perfect love, from the low bottom and ground of the heart....¹

The law was given to portray graphically man's sinfulness, to define it, ". . . to make it appear: as a corrosive is laid unto an old sore, not to heal it, but to stir it up. . . that a man might feel in what jeopardy he is, and how nigh death. . . ." ²

The moral law was by no means a way to justification in Tyndale's view at this point, but merely made man aware of his need. Salvation comes ". . . when we believe the promises. . . and are justified, in the blood of Christ, from all things whereof the law condemned us." ³

In the life of the Christian, the law (and the believer's attempts to keep it, which Tyndale called "deeds") was useful in three

¹ Tyndale, Prologue to the New Testament of 1525 (Cologne fragment), in P.S. vol. 1, p. 10.

² Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Book of Exodus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 416. Tyndale's thoughts here are clearly Lutheran in influence. In his lectures on Galatians Luther wrote of the law: "It not only frightenes and annoys...but with its whippings it drives us to Christ, just as a good teacher whips, trains, and disciplines his pupils...." "The law does not justify him [the sinner] but it places his sin before his eyes, crushes him, leads him to a knowledge of himself, and shows him hell and the wrath and judgment of God." Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 1, pp. 346, 348.

³ Tyndale, Prologue to the New Testament of 1525 (Cologne fragment), in P.S. vol. 1, p. 11. Luther wrote: "The law is not only unnecessary for justification, but it is of no possible use at all...because the law is given neither so that it might justify and enliven, nor that it might help one to righteousness, but rather that it might depict sin and work wrath, that it might produce a guilty conscience." Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 39, part 1, p. 347.

ways: 1) To certify that ". . .we are heirs of everlasting life;" 2) To tame the flesh; and 3) To guide us in our actions with those around us.¹

Tyndale's doctrine of the law up to this point was taken in general terms from Luther's "Vorrede" to the 1522 edition of Newe Testament Deutsch, which, as has already been shown, was the basis for the Prologue to the "Cologne fragment."

In conjunction with his publication of the Pentateuch complete with prologues to the five individual books in 1530, a new aspect of the law appears in Tyndale's writings. This change is most clearly illustrated in Tyndale's A Pathway into Holy Scripture,² printed in 1530-31. The Pathway was a rewrite of the prologue to the "Cologne fragment" of 1525. In the Parker Society edition, Henry Walter has indicated additions to the 1525 Prologue by enclosing them in brackets. These additions are useful in displaying the evolution of Tyndale's concept of law over the span of five years. He wrote:

In the Gospel, when we believe the promises, we receive the spirit of life; and are justified, in the blood of Christ, from all things whereof the law condemned us. [And we receive love unto the law, and power to fulfil it, and grow therein daily.]³

¹Ibid. This too is typically Lutheran. In a series of sermons on I John 4:16 f., Luther argues that although works furnish no basis for salvation, it "damages" faith not to express itself in works. Faith was to be exercised in works. (Luther, Luthers Werke, W.A., band 36, p. 467.) As Althaus explains, to Luther "Es ist Not fur den glauben, wenn er der Bewahrung im Leben, der 'Zeichen,' die sie ihm bedeutet, entbehrt." P. Althaus, Die Theologie Martin Luthers (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1962), p. 379. Luther also states that God's law functions to help us relate to our fellow man through the divinely instituted offices of parents, teachers, government, etc. See Luthers Werke, W.A., band 40, part 1, p. 479.

²Tyndale, A Pathway into Holy Scripture, P.S. vol. 1, pp. 1-28.

³Ibid., p. 11.

The new ingredient in Tyndale's doctrine is a love for the law which springs as a natural result from man's salvation. This love furnishes the power to fulfil the law.¹

This love for the law was a natural spontaneous outgrowth of justification. In discussing people who feel that they are justified by outwardly conforming to the law, Tyndale wrote, "They set a vail on Moses' face, and see not how the law requireth love from the bottom of the heart [and that love only is the fulfilling of the law]."² Once again the new emphasis was on "fulfilling the law." Yet Tyndale was not advocating perfectionism. He continued:

¹Luther taught that before the Fall, man could fulfil the law of God and did so joyfully. This relationship between man and God can begin to be restored through the work of Christ, but will only be fully restored in the life to come. See Luthers Werke, W.A., band 39, part 1, pp. 365f. Although Althaus paraphrases Luther as saying "Der Geist hat in ihnen neue Regungen (motus) erzeugt, die Liebe zu Gott und seinem Gesetz, den Hass gegen das Böse," P. Althaus, Die Theologie Martin Luthers, p. 233, the idea of loving God's law is not to be found in the citation given. See Luthers Werke, W.A., band 39, part 1, p. 395, which reads, "Deinde concipimus per fidem Spiritum sanctum, qui novos motus parit et voluntatem imbuunt, ut vere incipiat Deum amare et peccatum destestari in carne reliquum." Luther seems particularly reticent to speak of love for the law. In his exposition of Psalm 119, where the Psalmist speaks of loving the law quite frequently (vs. 47-48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 159, 163, 165), Luther makes only one rather mild comment about loving the commandments of Christ: "...It is wonderful to love the commandments of Christ and have delight in them, since they command us to undergo the sufferings and crosses of this world." Luther's Works, vol. 11, p. 452. Luther does speak of doing the works of the law out of confidence in and love for God and His righteousness. This relationship he illustrates by noting how a husband, confident in the love of his wife, does great and small works on her behalf under no compulsion but that of love. See Luther's Works, vol. 44, p. 27. The emphasis here is on a confidence in God's unconditional grace producing love for good works, not vice versa.

²Ibid., p. 12.

They that have this right faith, consent to the law, that it is righteous and good; and justify God which made the law; and have delectation in the law (notwithstanding that they cannot fulfil it [as they would,] for their weakness); and they abhor whatsoever the law forbideth, though they cannot [always] avoid it.¹

In the Prologue Upon the Book of Exodus Tyndale described the law as driving sinners to Christ that they "...might see the great love of God to us-ward in Christ, that we ...henceforth overcome with kindness, might love again, and of love keep the commandments."² The same theme appears in the Prologue to the Prophete Jonas (1531) where he wrote that the Scripture contained:

...first the law, to condemn all flesh; secondarily the gospel, . . .promises of mercy for all that repent and acknowledge their sins at the preaching of the law, and consent in their hearts that the law is good, and submit themselves to be scholars to learn to keep the law,³

For, as he continued,

...God's law never ceaseth to condemn a man until it be written in his heart, and until he keep it naturally without compulsion... save only of pure love to God and his neighbour.⁴

In 1533 Tyndale produced An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII Chapters of Mathew,⁵ "...which three chapters," he wrote, "are the key and door of the scripture, and the restoring again of Moses' law corrupt by the scribes and pharisees."⁵ The law

¹Ibid., p. 13.

²Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Book of Exodus, P.S. vol. 1, p. 416.

³Tyndale, Prologue to the Prophete Jonas, P.S. vol. 1, p. 449.

⁴Ibid., p. 450.

⁵Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol 2, p. 1.

correctly understood was a key to unlock the meaning of the text.

"The first and principal key," Tyndale called it, "to open the door of the scripture."¹ He amplified this pronouncement, explaining:

... all the good promises which are made us throughout all the scripture, for Christ's sake, for his love, his passion or suffering, his blood-shedding or death, are all made us on this condition and covenant on our party, that we henceforth love the law of God, to walk therein, and to do it, and fashion our lives thereafter: insomuch that whosoever hath not the law of God written in his heart...the same hath no part in the promises, nor can have any true faith in the blood of Christ; because there is no promise made him, but to them only that promise to keep the law.²

Thus at this point in Tyndale's understanding, loving the law, and doing it, had become a necessary condition for continued salvation. As he stated it, "...none of us can be received to grace but upon a condition to keep the law, neither yet continue any longer in grace than that purpose lasteth."³

The Conditional Covenant

Developing along with, and to some degree contingent upon Tyndale's doctrine of the law, was his view that God relates to man on the basis of conditional covenants. This view seems to have evolved along with that of the law in Tyndale's mind. One of the factors which may have contributed to the covenant idea was a shift in his view of heavenly rewards. In the New Testament Prologue

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 6.

³Ibid., p. 7.

of 1525 (Cologne fragment) Tyndale wrote to the issue of loving one's neighbours:

And that we must doo frely after the ensample
of Christ with oute eny other respecte/ save oure
neighbours welth enly/ [sic] and nether loke for rewarde
in erth/ ner yett in heven for oure dedes....¹

When, in 1530 he used the Prologue as a basis for The Pathway to the Holy Scripture, significant changes had crept into the text:

And that we must do freely, after the example of
Christ, without any other respect, save our
neighbour's wealth only; and neither look forward
for reward in the earth, not yet in heaven, for the
deserving of merits of our deeds, as friars preach;
though we know that good deeds are rewarded both in
this life and in the life to come.²

Perhaps the coupling of a developing doctrine of heavenly rewards, with the idea that love was the means to fulfil the moral law of God, led in Tyndale's mind to a reciprocal relationship between man and God.³

This doctrine of the conditional covenant becomes more and more a dominant theme of Tyndale's writings after 1530. One can, in fact, find it in basic form in The Practice of the Prelates (1530). In giving his advice on Henry VIII's divorce of Queen Catharine, Tyndale wrote:

¹ Tyndale, Prologue to the New Testament (1525), in Arber, The First Printed New Testament in English, p. 11.

² Tyndale, The Pathway into Holy Scripture, P.S. vol. 1, p. 20, italics mine.

³ Such a position should be distinguished from that normally associated with John Calvin. For Calvin the covenant of God was His promise to man, which He was obligated to fulfil. In Christ's person and work, God did fulfil that promise. Calvin's use of "covenant" is the equivalent of "testament." See Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book II, Chapters IX, X, XI, Book III, Chapter XVII, Book IV, Chapters XIV, XV, XVI, XVII. Tyndale's conditional-covenant, with its stress on man's responsibility, had the effect of drawing out of man a promise of obedience.

If the king's most noble grace will needs have another wife, then let him search the laws of God, whether it be lawful or not.... If the law of God suffer it, then let his grace put forth a little treatise in print...that all men may see it.... and then let not his grace be afraid either of the emperor, or of his lords... for God hath promised to keep them that keep his laws. If we care to keep his laws, he will care for the keeping of us....¹

God's continued grace is here depicted as conditional upon man's obedience in keeping divine laws.

In The Exposition of The First Epistle of St. John, which appeared in 1531, Tyndale argued that God who alone is able to do all things "...hath made appointment betwixt him and us, in Christ's blood; and hath bound himself to give us whatsoever we ask in his name. . . ."² This "appointment" to which Tyndale referred is later explained as an "indented obligation."³ He expressed the same concept in his The Testament of William Tracy Expounded⁴: "...God never made a promise, but upon an appointment or covenant, under which whosoever will not come can be no partaker of the promise."⁵ Once more, God's promises are conditional. Yet Tyndale reiterates that he is not teaching salvation by works. "Faith justifieth thee; that is, bringeth remission of sins," he wrote. "But if thou wilt not go back again, but continue in

¹ Tyndale, The Practice of the Prelates, P.S. Vol. 2, p. 323. italics mine.

² Tyndale, The Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John, P.S. vol. 2, p. 166.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tyndale, The Testament of William Tracy Expounded, P.S. vol. 3, pp. 261-283.

⁵ Ibid., p. 276.

grace, and come to that salvation and glorious resurrection of Christ, thou must work and join works to thy faith."¹ We see here that though justification is by faith, continued salvation is by fulfilling the condition of doing God's law.

The development of this conditional-covenant theology is nicely illustrated by a comparison of the prologue Tyndale wrote to the Pentateuch in 1530 with its counterpart in a revised edition just four years later. In the earlier work he wrote:

Seek therefore in the scripture as thou readest it first the law, what God commanded us to do; and secondarily, the promises, which God promiseth us again, namely in Christ Jesus our Lord.²

The 1534 edition read:

Seek therefore in the scripture, as thou readest it, chiefly and above all, the covenants made between God and us; that is to say, the law and the commandments which God commandeth us to do; and then the mercy promised unto all them that submit themselves unto the law.³

Why this elevation of covenants over promises as the key to Scripture? Tyndale explained:

For all the promises throughout the whole scripture do include a covenant: that is, God bindeth himself to fulfil that mercy unto thee only if thou wilt endeavour thyself to keep his laws....⁴

The conditional covenant is here expanded to include all the promises of scripture. It has become Tyndale's organizing principle for biblical interpretation.

¹Ibid.

²Tyndale, Prologue Upon the Five Books of Moses, P.S. vol. 1, p. 399.

³Ibid., p. 403.

⁴Ibid.

The extent to which the covenant motif came to dominate Tyndale's thinking is evidenced in his translation of Genesis completed in 1534. Whereas in the 1530 edition he used a variety of terms to translate *ברית*, four years later, the new translation showed his new preference for the term "covenant."

1530 edition	Reference	1534 edition
bonde	9:11	couenaunt
bōde	9:12	couenaunt
made couenaunte	15:18	made a couenaunt
bonde	17:2	couenaunt
testamēt	17:4	couenaunt
bonde	17:7	couenaunt
everlastynge testamente	17:7	everlastynge couenaunt
testamente	17:10	couenaunt
bond	17:10	couenaunt
testamente...bonde	17:13	couenaunt...couenaunt
testamēt	17:14	couenaunt
bonde...bonde	17:19	couenaunt...couenaunt
bonde	17:21	couenaunt ¹

In An Exposition Uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew (1533), Tyndale views the "Sermon of the Mount" as set in conditional terms. His exposition is described as "...a prologe very necessarie, contayning the whole summe of the covenaut made betwene God and us. . . ."² Christ's teaching restored the proper use of the law which the Pharisees had corrupted. This law was the "key" to Scripture. "...All the promises which are made us throughout all the scripture. . .are all made us on the condition and covenant on our party."³ Those who keep the covenant (love the law of God, do it) benefit from the promises. Those who do not

¹J. I. Mombert, William Tyndale's Five Books of Moses called The Pentateuch, (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1884) pp. ciii-cviii.

²Tyndale, Exposition, Matthew V-VII, P.S. vol. 2, p. 1.

³Ibid., p. 6.

meet the conditions, ". . .hath no part in the promises, nor can they have any true faith in the blood of Christ; because there is no promise made him, but to them only that promise to keep the law."¹ Yet, maintains Tyndale, this is not justification by works. He explained by use of a royal analogy:

For you see that the king pardoneth no murderer but on a condition, that he henceforth keep the law, and do no more so; and ye know well enough that he is saved by grace, favour, and pardon ere the keeping of the law came: howbeit, if he break the law afterward, he falleth again in the same danger of death. Even so none of us can be received to grace but upon a condition to keep the law, neither yet continue any longer in grace than that purpose lasteth.²

Thus salvation, as well as the rest of God's promises, is initially received as a free gift of God's grace, however it is only sustained upon the condition that the Christian maintain the law.

It is in the New Testament of 1534 that we find the fullest expression of Tyndale's covenant theology and its influence upon his exegesis. In the prologue to that work Tyndale laid down a basic axiom of his hermeneutical method:

The ryght waye, ye and onlye waye to vnderstonde the scripture vnto oure salvacion, is, that we earnestlye and above all thinge [sic], serche for the profession of oure baptyme [sic] or covenants made betwene God an vs.³

To aid the reader in this search Tyndale included a number of marginal notes, to "set lyght in the mergent" as he called it. The main theme of these notes was to identify and explain the covenants

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 7.

³Tyndale, The New Testament (1534), reprint edition edited by N. H. Wallis (Cambridge: The University Press, 1938), p. 4.

and their implications: "I have ever noted the covenants in the mergents, and also the promises."¹ It is in these glosses that we see the dominant hold the covenant theme had taken in Tyndale's exegesis. Once again he reiterates that every promise in the New Testament was to be read in conditional terms:

...Where thou findest a promyse and no covenant expressed there with, there must thou vnderstande a covenant. For all the promyses of mercie and grace... are made vpon the condicion that we kepe the lawe.²

This hermeneutical premise led to forced interpretations. In commenting on Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy," Tyndale wrote:

Here God hath made a covenant with vs, to be mercifull vnto vs, yf we wilbe mercifull one to another: so that the man which showeth mercie vnto his neyboure, maye be bolde to trust in God for mercie at all nedes.³

Tyndale has interpreted a direct statement as a conditional covenant, without regard for the immediate context. His interpretation of Luke 11:9-10⁴, ". . . Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, received; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened;" is even more strained by an attempt to stretch it over a conditional framework:

¹ Ibid., p. 5.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴ Tyndale incorrectly indicated that the reference was Matthew 12, see Ibid., p. 5.

It is to be vnderstonde, if that when thy neybour
axeth, seketh or knocketh to the, thou then shew him
the same mercie which thou desyrest of god, then hath
god bounde himslfe to helpe the agayne, and else
not [sic] ¹

We see here that Tyndale has left the clear emphasis of the parable to which this is the application, in order to read it in terms of a covenant.

When one compares notes from the 1525 New Testament with their 1534 counterparts, the emphasis on a conditional covenant is evident in the latter. This is the case in Tyndale's treatment of Matthew 13:12: "For whoever has, to him shall more be given. . . but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him." In 1525 he wrote: ". . .Where the word of God is vnderstode/ there hit multiplieth & makith the people better. Where hit is not vnderstode/ there hit decreasith and makith the people woarse."² The 1534 note read: "A covenant to them that love the word of God to further it, that they shall increase therein, and another that they that love it not shall lose it again, and wax blind."³

The "covenant of mercy," as Tyndale called it, was a dominant theme of his 1534 notes. Again and again God's forgiveness is spoken of in conditional terms. The first chapter of I Peter is described as setting forth ". . .the treasure of mercy which God hath bound himself to give us for Christ's sake and then our duty,

¹Ibid. p. 5.

²Tyndale, The First Printed English New Testament, ed. E. Arber, (London: 1871), p. 42.

³Fry, A Bibliographic Description, p. 47.

what we are bound to do again if we will be partakers of that mercy."¹ On Paul's exhortation, "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this will he also reap," (Galatians 6:7), Tyndale writes, "The covenant of mercy in Christ is made only to them that will work."² He was not about to miss driving home his message in commenting on Paul's provocative statement, ". . .work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (Philippians 2:12): "As ye be saved from sin through faith so work according to the covenant until ye come to the salvation of glory. For if ye cease working, the spirit quencheth again, and ye cease to be a partaker of the promise."³

Almost the mere mention of God's mercy was enough cause for Tyndale to bring in his covenant interpretation. In Ephesians 2:4-5 Paul wrote: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love. . .even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ. . . ." Tyndale's response read: "The promises of mercy in Christ's blood are made us on that condition that we keep the law and love one another as Christ loved us."⁴

We have seen that in contrast to Tyndale's early attempts at exegesis, which were almost totally Lutheran, his works from 1530 took on a new hermeneutical emphasis. This innovation was based upon a new understanding of the role of the law in the Christian's life, and as a corollary to that, the development of a conditional-covenant theology.

¹Ibid., p. 53.

²Ibid., p. 51.

³Ibid., p. 49.

⁴Ibid., p. 51.

Both Tyndale and Luther agreed as to the nature and purpose of God's law. Tyndale however, went beyond Luther in his stress on the necessity for a love of the law. This love was the natural result of justification. It was the key element upon which all God's promises were contingent. Indeed, one's salvation was assured only in so far as this love for the law remained. This new treatment of law and covenant produced a hermeneutical shift in Tyndale's approach to the text. Whereas in the 1520's he made an understanding of God's promises the major priority for a correct understanding of Scripture, in the 1530's a search for the covenants took precedence. Since every promise was binding on God's part only on condition that the Christian maintained a love for the law (which implied a willingness to do what the law commanded), it became vitally important for a believer to know exactly what was required of him. This led Tyndale to "force" his exegesis by interpreting every promise conditionally. His exegesis became inflexible in response to a legalistic theology.

The Sources of Tyndale's Law-Covenant Theology

The most obvious place to begin a search for influences which led Tyndale to adopt his conditional covenant theology would be Luther who exerted such a strong influence over him in the matter of justification by faith. Yet Luther never espoused a covenant theology, other than in reference to baptism as God's new covenant.¹

¹This is developed in Luther's treatise "The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism in 1519", Luthers Werke, W.A., band 2, pp. 727-737; Luther's Works, vol. 35, pp. 29-43.

In the act of baptism Luther held that God made a new covenant with His children which was an assurance that their sins would be forgiven throughout life. The Christian's obligation in this covenant was to fully understand its meaning: "To submit himself into the sacrament of baptism, to participate in God's gracious work in him by fighting against sin and killing it until he himself dies."¹ In a political sense Luther opted for a time for a social contract, yet later rejected it as unworkable.² Neither did Luther develop a theory of the law which would allow for a conditional covenant in Tyndale's sense.

Trinterud has proposed that the peripatetic Tyndale most likely encountered the covenant motif among the Rhineland reformers. He points to the Isaiah commentary of Oecolampadius,³ where God's blessing is contingent upon man's obedience.⁴ Trinterud goes on to suggest that Zwingli adopted a covenant idea in writing against the Anabaptists, while Capito introduced it in his commentaries. "From these beginnings," he writes, "the law-covenant principle came quickly to be the organizing principle of the entire Rhineland reformation. . . ."⁵

¹Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 35, pp. 33-34.

²See John Neville Figgis, Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius, 1414-1625, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1916), pp. 71f. L.J. Trinterud, "Origins of Puritanism," Church History, vol. 20, March 1951, p. 40. F.E. Cranz, "An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society," in Harvard Theological Studies 19 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

³J. Oecolampadius, In Jesaiam Prophetam, (Basel: 1525), p.150.

⁴L.J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," Church History, vol. 20, March, 1951, p. 41.

⁵Ibid.

Clebsch on the other hand, sees no firm evidence that Tyndale adopted his unique theology from the Rhineland writers.¹ The direct links are just not there; or have yet to be discovered. Tyndale refers to Oecolampadius, but never in the context of a conditional covenant.

It seems plausible that Tyndale's intensive studies of Hebrew in preparation for translating the Pentateuch directed his thoughts toward the concept of covenant. The fact that he never felt the need to justify his doctrine, but rather uses it as something which is self-evident, leads one to speculate that Tyndale's doctrine developed parallel to that of the Rhineland reformers.

¹William A. Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 199.

VII. Tyndale's Influence

The impact of Tyndale's exegesis was immense. His works were widely circulated in England despite royal and ecclesiastical prohibitions against them. His early works were largely responsible for introducing the theology of Luther to the laymen of England. His later writings, especially the New Testament translations complete with prologues and marginal notes, underwent numerous reprintings, infecting many other English reformers with his theology of a conditional covenant.

John Strype, in his Ecclesiastical Memorials, wrote: "Much light was let in among the people by the New Testament, and other good books, in English, which, for the most part, being published beyond the sea, were by stealth brought into England and dispersed here by well disposed men."¹ That many of these "good books" came from the pen of William Tyndale is clearly seen in the numerous proclamations against them.

On October 23, 1526, Cuthbert Tunstall, the Bishop of London, at the instigation of Cardinal Wolsey, issued a proclamation to the archdeacons of his diocese, to call in among other books: The New Testament of Tyndale, Parable of the Wicked Mammon, Obedience of a Christian Man, and Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans.²

¹ John Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, (London: Samuel Bagster, 1816) vol. 1, p. 261. A good discussion of the circulation of foreign books in England is found in R.L. Williams, "Aspects of Heresy and Reformation in England, 1515-1540," an unpublished Doctoral thesis, The University of Cambridge, 1976.

² John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 4, p. 667. See also D. Wilkins, Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, (London: R. Gosling, 1737), vol. 3, p. 707.

A similar list was recorded in November of the same year in a mandate to John Voysey, bishop of Exeter by the archbishop of Canterbury.¹

On June 22, 1530, the leading Church scholars of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were called on to advise the King on heretical books. Their report read:

After full discussion it has been agreed that the books entitled The Wicked Mammon, . . . The Obedience of a Christian Man, and others printed beyond the sea, contain pestiferous errors and blasphemies.²

People possessing such books were to bring them, within fifteen days, to the local bishop, curate, or parish priest. The purchase or possession of the listed books would result in being called before the King's Council.³

By 1531 more of Tyndale's titles were added to the list of prohibited books in a proclamation made at Paul's Cross. People were warned ". . . against the buying, selling, or reading of the following books: . . . An Answer of Tyndale to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, in English, The First Book of Moses, called Genesis, Prologue in the Second Book of Moses, called Exodus, A Prologue in the Third Book of Moses, called Leviticus, A Prologue in the Fourth Book of Moses, called Numeri, A Prologue in the Fifth Book of Moses,

¹ J.S. Brewer, ed. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1870) reprinted by Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1967, vol. 4 pt. 2, # 2607, p. 1158. Hereafter this source will be designated Letters and Papers, volume, part, number, and page.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., vol. 5, Appendix 18, pp. 768-69.

called Deuteronomy, The Practice of the Prelates, the New Testament in English, with an Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, The Obedience of A Christian Man, . . .¹

Proclamations such as these indicate a lively traffic in "heretical" books in England during the 1520's. Though it is impossible to determine the number of books imported, nor the number burned by zealous ecclesiastics, we do have evidence that many of Tyndale's works found their way into private, if not secret libraries. The contents of some collections are recorded by John Foxe in documenting the trials of certain martyrs.

One such man was Richard Bayfield. A monk at Bury, Bayfield was approached by Dr. Robert Barnes who gave him three books: Tyndale's New Testament in English, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, and Obedience of A Christian Man.² In these books Bayfield ". . .prospered...mightely in two years space."³ He became a colporteur, selling the works of Tyndale and Frith, until his arrest and subsequent burning at Smithfield in November of 1531. When asked which "heretical" books he had read, he added the following to the three previously mentioned: The Practice of the Prelates, Tyndale's Answer to Thomas More, and The Prologues to the Five Books of Moses.⁴

¹Ibid., vol. 5, Appendix 18, pp. 768-69.

²John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 4., p. 681.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 683.

A certain John Tewkesbury, who also ended his days in the flames at Smithfield, attributed his conversion to the reading of Tyndale's New Testament, and Parable of the Wicked Mammon. When examined on the articles of the latter, Foxe recorded his response: "Take ye the book and read it over, and I think in my conscience, ye shall find no fault in it."¹

When James Bainhorm, a lawyer, was questioned, he confessed to possessing Tyndale's New Testament, Parable of the Wicked Mammon, Obedience of A Christian Man, The Practice of the Prelates, and Tyndale's Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, in which he offered, ". . .he never saw any errors."²

John Strype records that Queen Anne Boleyn possessed a copy of the prohibited Obedience of a Christian Man. Lending it to her attendant, who in turn showed it to a young suitor named John Zouch, the book fell into the hands of Dr. Sampson, the dean of the King's Chapel. Sampson in turn passed it on to Cardinal Wolsey. Upon learning of its loss, Anne replied, "Well, it shall be the dearest book that ever the dean or cardinal took away."³

Thus we see that Tyndale was read and appreciated at many levels of society. If one work had to be chosen as the most influential of all Tyndale's books, it would most likely be his revised New Testament of 1534. Between 1525 and 1566, forty-eight editions of the New Testament were printed in English.⁴ Of these,

¹Ibid., p. 688.

²Ibid., p. 697.

³John Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol. 1, pp. 176-77.

⁴Fry, A Bibliographic Description.

roughly one-third contained the 1534 prologues in nearly complete form. One fourth of the editions carried a complete set of marginal notes.

There is good evidence that Tyndale's conditional-covenant theme was picked up by later English reformers. In 1538 John Bale wrote a play entitled, "A Trajedy or Interlude, manifesting the chief promises of God unto Man in all Ages, from the Beginning of the World to the Death of Jesus Christ: A Mystery."¹ In this piece of protestant propaganda, there are seven acts, each of which centers around God's covenants and man's obligation to obey. In each act there are but two speakers, one of whom is God; the others include: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and John the Baptist.

In the first act, the promise of the "seed" is made to Adam. God speaking says:

Cleave to thys promise, with all inward power,
Firmly enclose it in thy remembrance fast,
Folde it in thy faith with full hope day and houre,
And thy salvacion it wyll be at last.²

To Noah God laments,

Thou knowest I have given to him [man of Noah's day]
convenient space,
With lawful warnings, yet he amendeth in no place.
The natural lawe, which I wrote in his heart,
Hath he outrassed, all goodness putting apart:
Of health the covenant, which I to Adam made,
He regardeth not, but walketh a damnable tread.³

The conditional nature of the covenant becomes clear in the third act. God says to Abraham:

¹R. Dodsley, A Select Collection of Old Plays, (London: 1744), vol. 1, pp. 1-37.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 10.

The thyng I shall do, I wyll not hyde from the,
 Whome I have blessed for thy true fydelyte.
 For I knowe thou wilt cause both thy chyl dren and servaunts,
 In my wayes to walke, and trust unto my covenantes,
That I may perfourme with the my earnest promes.¹

In the sixth act, God's complaint to Elijah reads:

But Israel wyll not knowe me, nor my condycyons.

Yet the divine wrath is soothed by the prophets pleading and
 God states:

May the wyfe forget the chylde of her owne bodye?
 No more can I them whych wyll do my commaundmentes,
 But must preserve them from all inconvenyentes.²

One sees in these lines the raw elements of Tyndale's
 covenant theology. Though all the covenants discussed are Old
 Testament, the title of the work calls them "the chief Promises
 of God unto Man in all Ages," suggesting that the author felt they
 were universal.

In 1548 John Hooper produced A Declaration of the ten holy
 comaundementes of allmyghthye God.³ His preface to this work
 entitled "Unto the Christian Reader," is framed in conditional
 terms. He wrote:

...Forasmuch as there can be no contract, peace,
 alliance, or confederacy between two persons or more,
 except first the persons that will contract, agree within
 themselves upon such things as shall be contracted...
 seeing these ten commandments are nothing else but
 the tablets or writings that contain the conditions of
 peace between God and Man, Gen. xix, and declareth at

¹Ibid. pp. 15-16, italics mine.

²Ibid., p. 30.

³John Hooper, A Declaration of the Ten Holy Commandments
 of Almighty God, ed. for the Parker Society by Samuel Carr,
 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1843) vol. 1, pp. 249-430.

large how and to what the persons named in the writings are bound unto the other; . . . it is necessary to know how God and man was made at one, that such conditions could be agreed upon and confirmed with such solemn and public evidences, as these tablets. . . .¹

Sounding more like a legal brief than a theological treatise, Hooper continued with a statement of the mutual responsibilities of the contracting parties:

The contents whereof bind God to aid and succour keep and preserve, warrant and defend man from all ill, both of body and soul, and at the last to give him eternal bliss and everlasting felicity. Exodi. xix. Deut. iv. Matt. xi. John iii. iv. v. vi.

Man is bound of the other part, to obey, serve, and keep God's commandments; to love him, honour him, and fear him above all things.²

Hooper's conditional covenant is unquestionably very similar to that of Tyndale. Yet to prove a direct link between the two reformers is difficult. One would assume that Hooper would have read Tyndale's New Testament and perhaps his other works, yet he never quotes from, nor even mentions his countryman. Hooper's exile to Zurich in the latter years of Henry VIII's reign, and his close friendship with Bullinger, seem to point toward the Rhineland reformers as the source of his theology.

Another echo of Tyndale's theme is recorded for us in John Bradford's Defense of Election, (1554). Bradford wrote this piece to counter a work probably written by one Harry Hart.³

¹Ibid., p. 255.

²Ibid., pp. 255-56.

³That Hart was the author of this work attacking election is supported by a letter from Bradford to Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, in which he describes a "little Treatise" he was sending along for their perusal. He also included a "writing of Harry Hart's own hand," which he felt quite dangerous. See Aubrey Townsend, ed. The Writings of John Bradford, P.S. vol. 1, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1848) pp. 320-21, and the note on p. 318.

The latter treatise is no longer extant in its original form, but Bradford cites from the work in order to refute it. In these citations the conditional covenant motif is clearly in evidence. Hart writes that election,

...putteth away the covenant between God and man... wholly and altogether on man's part; for it taketh all the power and ableness, which God hath before given, from him.¹

Unconditional election, he feared, would vitiate the need for obedience on man's part. To further his argument the writer adds that, ". . .no man is lost of God, . . . if they come to destruction wholly and clearly ignorant, the conditional promise made of the Lord to the people by Moses doth declare."² To support this contention he cited the parable of the "talents" (Matthew 25:29). In Tyndale's New Testament of 1534, he wrote "Couenaunt" in the margin next to this passage.

Thus we see that not only were Tyndale's numerous works in wide circulation in England, but his theology of a conditional covenant continued to exert an influence after his death in 1536. Considering his opportunities and those in opposition to him, Tyndale's influence upon the Reformation in England was considerable.

¹Ibid., p. 322.

²Ibid.

Conclusion

The life of William Tyndale furnishes a model for the development of exegetical method. A first generation Protestant, he reacted strongly against the current trends in biblical interpretation. Yet his energies were not wholly consumed in a negative polemical attack upon the system. He worked in a positive way to provide first a basis for public understanding of the Bible, his New Testament translation; and then to aid the Christian reader in comprehending the Scriptures. His early years were dominated by the mind and method of Martin Luther. Luther was the source of his exegesis, and Tyndale was content to merely amplify the words of the master. Later, with new confidence and maturity, we find the English exile going beyond his mentor, and in some cases directly contrary to him.

In assessing Tyndale as an exegete, the positive elements of his method outweigh the negative, yet some weaknesses are evident. The law-covenant emphasis of his last six years became so dominant that it tended to "force" his exegesis. Each passage was interpreted through the grid of a conditional-covenant theology.

Tyndale's doctrine of "law" with its stress on human responsibility, forced him into a theological corner. At times he was very close to a "double-justification" position. He failed to anticipate the conflict that his view of human obedience would have with the doctrine of unconditional election, which he also held.

Tyndale's strengths as an interpreter were rooted in his exceptional abilities as a linguist. He insisted on precise

definition, and detested the practice of "juggling words" to prove a theological point. His conclusions were founded upon solid textual evidence including grammatical, contextual, etymological, and theological considerations. This precision allowed him to be clear as well as authoritative. Hume writes:

This unflagging zeal to explain, to convey, to make utterly clear, is the characteristic which lies behind all aspects of Tyndale's style. His constant use of plain words, in an age when the temptation to garnish one's prose with resounding inkhorn terms...was continually present, is very striking. He avoids large, abstract, or technical terms almost entirely.¹

As with Colet and Erasmus, Tyndale's doctrine of Scripture had a profound effect upon his exegetical method. The Bible was God's communication without any admixture of human error. It was not to be treated as a network of mysteries only understood by allegorical interpretation. Rather, God's revelation was clear and forthright when taken in the literal sense. Its riches were unlocked not through human subtlety, but by the illumination of the Spirit.

¹ A. Hume, "A Study of the Writings of the English Protestant Exiles, 1525-1535," p. 26.

CHAPTER III

Exegesis in the Early Anglican Reformers

This third section of study in the development of exegetical method in early Tudor England examines the work of six leading Anglican reformers: John Bale (1495-1563), John Bradford (c. 1510-1555), Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), John Hooper (d. 1555), Hugh Latimer (c. 1485-1555), and Nicholas Ridley (1500-1555). These men will be dealt with as a group, rather than individually for a number of reasons.

Two primary concerns united these reformers and impacted upon their hermeneutical method. First of all they were men who desired more than anything else to clearly present and apply biblical truth to laymen. Secondly, the early Anglicans desired to promote reform by cleansing the English Church of doctrinal error and superstition. Therefore, the sermon and the polemical treatise are the two formats for their exposition of Scripture. Only two men, Bale and Hooper, produced a commentary on a complete book of the Bible.¹ Thus the task of defining their hermeneutical methodology becomes difficult. The researcher must garner material from numerous sermons, treatises, meditations, and letters. This may explain, in part, the relative paucity of scholarly work on

¹Hooper's commentary on Jonah was actually a collection of sermons the reformer preached in the presence of King Edward VI, while Bale produced one of the most important pieces of apocalyptic exegesis of his time, The Image of bothe Churches.

the exegesis of these men.¹ Hermeneutical issues are touched upon in the works concerned with the theology of the reformers during this period, but exegetical method is rarely if ever emphasised.² The numerous biographies of the "Marian Martyrs"

¹E. R. Gane's Ph.D. thesis, "The Historical Significance of Scriptural Exegesis employed in Some Sixteenth-Century English Sermons" (University of Nebraska, 1976), does focus on: the concept of the Bible, allegory, typology, literary exposition, and the use of the Fathers, but his sources are confined to sermons. Only Latimer is selected as a representative of the pre-Elizabethan Anglicans for the purpose of this study. J.W. Blench touches upon some aspects of exegesis, but his material, like Gane's, is sermonic, see Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1964).

²For current work on Bale's theology see: R. Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse (Oxford: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978); L.P. Fairfield, "John Bale and the Development of Protestant Hagiography in England," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol. 24, April 1973, pp. 145-60; K.R. Firth, The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645 (Oxford: The University Press, 1979); J.W. Harris, John Bale, A Study in the Major Literature of the Reformation (Illinois: Studies in Language and Literature, 1940); R. Pineas, "William Tyndale's Influence on John Bale's Polemical Use of History," Archiv, vol. 53, 1962, pp. 79-96. For Thomas Cranmer see: G.W. Bromiley, Baptism and The Anglican Reformers (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), pp. 33-48; Bromiley, Thomas Cranmer Theologian (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956) pp. 12-27; G.E. Duffield, The Work of Thomas Cranmer (Berkshire: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1964) pp. x-xxxv, and 341-65; C.W. Dugmore, The Mass and the English Reformers (London: McMillian Co., 1958); J.C. McLelland The Visible Words of God (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957); C. Smyth, Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI (Cambridge: The University Press, 1926). For John Hooper see W.M. West, "John Hooper and the Origins of Puritanism," The Baptist Quarterly, vol. 15, 1953-54, pp. 346-68; and continued in vol. 16, 1955-56, pp. 22-46, 67-88. For Nicholas Ridley see G.W. Bromiley, Nicholas Ridley 1500-1555 (London: Church Book Press Room, 1950); C.H. Hutchins "Nicholas Ridley; English Reformer, Theologian, and Martyr," Evangelical Quarterly, vol. 41, 1969, pp. 232-70. This is based upon the unpublished B.D. thesis, "The Theology of Nicholas Ridley in Connection with the Book of Common Prayer" (The University of Leeds, 1967). In his treatment of the general theology of this period, P.E. Hughes includes a chapter on the doctrine of Scripture in the Anglican Reformation in which issues like inspiration,

place very little importance on the more technical aspects of their theology.

A second reason for treating the six as one group is the similarity of their preparation for theology and exegesis. All but one went to Cambridge University.¹ Four of them, Bradford, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley went on to earn an M.A. from the same institution. While at university, they were uniformly influenced by the "New Learning," and became critical of abuses within the Church in England long before they broke with it on doctrinal grounds. With the exception of Bradford, who took to an ecclesiastical vocation rather late in life, they all rose to the office of bishop. In the latter years of the reign of Henry VIII, and for the whole of the Edwardian period, they were the dominant force in the Anglican reformation.

With the exception of Bale, who fled into exile at the time of young Edward's death, all of these men died within the same two year period as the most famous of the "Marian martyrs." During the short reign of Queen Mary, the reformation

illumination, the senses, and the Fathers are discussed. Only three reformers, Tyndale, Cranmer, and Whitaker, however are given significant attention. In the section on "How to study the Bible: (pp. 40-44) none of the pre-Elizabethan Anglicans are cited, Theology of the English Reformation (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), pp. 9-53. In an older work of the same nature by J. Hunt, there is no treatment of the doctrine of Scripture, exegesis, or hermeneutics. Religious Thought in England (London: Strahan and Co., 1970), vol. 1.

²Hoooper went to Oxford. H.C. Porter presents an interesting and helpful portrait of these "Cambridge Reformers," in his work, Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge (Cambridge: The University Press, 1958), pp. 41-98.

was reversed in England, only to be taken up again with the accession of Elizabeth, by the returning exiles whose lives and thoughts had been deeply influenced by their continental sojourn. Thus with the pre-Elizabethan Anglicans we have a neat terminus ad quem to this research. Although these men were influenced by exegetical works from across the channel, they represent the more indigenous first generation of the English Reformation.

I. The Doctrine of Scripture

The nature of God's Word

For the English reformers the Word of God, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, was the key basis for renewal in the visible church. In concert with their continental brethren, the Anglicans viewed the Bible as at the very heart of their reformation. It was God's revelation of truth and therefore it was imbued with complete authority.

The Scriptures were unique in that the sixty-six canonical books were authored by God. "The excellency of this word is so great," wrote Latimer, "and of so high dignity, that there is no earthly thing to be compared with it. The author thereof is great, that is, God himself, eternal, almighty, everlasting. The Scripture, because of him, is also great, eternal, mighty, and holy."¹ There is little doubt, for the English reformers at least, that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit extended to all parts of the Bible. Cranmer, in admonishing Henry VIII on a suspect translation of the Lord's Prayer, wrote:

Christ taught us to pray: 'Lead us not into temptation.'
And we should not alter any word in the scriptures, which
is wholly ministered unto us by the Ghost of God.
II Peter 1...²

Bradford, in the same vein, saw Scripture as "... the very true 'Word of God' written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost."³ Ampli-

¹Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 85.

²Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 106; see also p. 120.

³Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 370.

fying his point he quoted from Matthew (4:4) "Not by bread alone, but by every word of God the soul doth live," and added "Mark well, he saith not one or two words, . . . but he saith 'every word.'"¹

Hooper asserted that ". . . the word of God written is as perfect as God himself,"² thus it was never to be tampered with--it was complete.

The same word of God is the true pattern and perfect rule, after which all faithful people ought to govern their lives...without changing anything thereof, without putting to it or taking from it, knowing that all the works of God are perfect, but most chiefly his word.³

In that which the perfect revelation affirmed, there was no admixture of human error. In his commentary on Jonah, Hooper urged that ". . . we should, in Christ, embrace and receive the everlasting God and his infallible word. . . ." ⁴ Ridley and Bradford echo the same phrase: "the infallible word of God." It was Cranmer, however, who framed the doctrine of infallibility in the clearest terms. Quoting Psalm 116:11, "All men are liars," the Archbishop explained:

By these words it appeareth plain, that there was never man so virtuous, holy, nor so well learned, only the writers of scripture excepted, but either of ignorance

¹Ibid., p. 8; see also Ridley, P.S., pp. 7, 56, 68.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 509; see also vol. 2, p. 201. Hooper's statement is very similar to one of Calvin's in which he wrote that we owe to Scripture ". . . the same reverence we owe to God, because it has proceeded from him alone and has nothing human mixed in." Calvin, Ioannis Calvini ^{quae} opera supersunt omnia, ed. by G. Baum, E. Cunitz, E. Reuss, (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1863-1900), vol. 52, p. 383.

³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 43; see also p. 67, and vol. 1, p. 106.

⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 473; see also vol. 2, p. 599.

or of negligence, there escaped some faults in his writings and doings.¹

Speaking in more positive terms, he confessed, "As for me, I ground my belief upon God's word, wherein can be no error. . ."² His advice: ". . . Cleave ye fast to the sound and certain doctrine of God's infallible word, written in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments."³

Such a statement regarding divine inspiration was common among the early reformers in England and on the continent. In his Institutes Calvin wrote that the prophets and apostles were to,

...expound the ancient Scripture and to show that what is taught there has been fulfilled in Christ. Yet they were not to do this except from the Lord, that is, with Christ's Spirit as a precursor in a certain measure dictating the words. For by this condition Christ limited their embassy when he ordered them to go and teach not what they had thoughtlessly fabricated, but all that he had commanded them.⁴

On the next page of his monumental work, Calvin described the apostles as "scribes of the Holy Spirit," and their writings were therefore to be considered "oracles of God."⁵ Luther, at

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 11; see also p. 67, and vol. 2, pp. 24, and 46.

²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 368.

³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 19.

⁴Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. J. McNeill, trans., F. Battles, The Library of Christian Classics edition (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960) 4:8, 8, vol. 2, p. 1155.

⁵Ibid., p. 1156. Whether Calvin meant to imply verbal inerrancy or not, is a matter which has been widely debated, see: W. Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, trans. H. Knight, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), pp. 22-38; E. Dowey, Jr., The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 90-105; J.T. McNeill, "The Significance of the Word of God for Calvin," Church History, vol. 28, (1959), pp. 140-145.

times, made similar claims for the biblical text. In discussing the fact that the fathers have erred as is common to all men, he resolved, "...therefore, I am prepared to trust them only when their views [are supported] from Scripture, which has never erred."¹

The authority of God's Word

It followed that this inspired, infallible, perfect revelation from God was the sole authority in all matters of doctrine and practice. Bradford was characteristic of his contemporaries in saying:

This word of God trieth all doctrine; for we ought to have our consciences charged with nothing as touching religion, except the word of God, in the canon of the Bible....²

Satan's great strategy, warned Hooper, was to persuade men that God's word was not the final authority:

Trust to the holiness of the Scriptures: then shalt thou not be deceived. They say [the prelates] the holy Church must be heard and obeyed. True it is; but our faith is not grounded upon those that be in the Church...but upon the Word itself, as it appeareth....³

The Church was never meant to be in authority over the scriptures, but rather to bring men to God's revelation. Bradford used the "woman of Samaria" as an example of this relationship. The Church is like that woman in that she introduces us to the

¹Luther, W.A. vol. 7, p. 315. See also Luther's Works, vol. 32, p. 11.

²Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 9.

³Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 266.

word, but we believe them [the various books] and know them ". . . not because the Church saith they are the scriptures, but because they be so; being therefore assured by the same Spirit which wrote and spake them."¹ The individual was bound ". . . to follow the scripture only . . .; and with all humility. . . submit himself to the judgement and censure of the judge of judges, the word of God. . . ."2

The question of authority becomes even more difficult when the clear teaching of Scripture seems to go contrary to that of reason. For Cranmer there was no hesitation as to how such a dilemma was to be resolved:

In all matters of our Christian faith, written in the holy scripture, for our instruction and doctrine, how far soever they seem discrepant from reason, we must repress our imaginations, and consider God's pleasure and will, and yield thereto....³

An identical sentiment is found in Luther's writings. In commenting upon the Genesis account of creation in six days, Luther counsels the reader not to dismiss such a statement as unreasonable, rather, ". . . thue dem heiligen geist die eer, das er gelerter gewesen sie dann du."⁴ In another context the German reformer affirms, "Because God says it, I will believe that it is so; I will follow the word and regard my own thoughts and ideas as vain."⁵

¹Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 519.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 30.

³Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 34.

⁴Luther, W.A., vol. 12, p. 440.

⁵Ibid., vol. 37, p. 39.

In their general creedal productions the Anglican reformers do not place any significant emphasis upon the inspiration of Scripture, but rather focus on its authority. In 1552 the "bishops and other learned men," adopted forty-~~two~~ articles (later reduced to thirty-nine) "to root out the discord of opinions and establish the agreement of true religion." The fifth article reads:

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is neither read therein, nor may be proved thereby, although it be sometime received of the faithful, as godly, and profitable for an order, and comeliness; yet no man ought to be constrained to believe it as an article of faith....¹

The thrust here is to present Scripture as a totally sufficient guide for doctrine and practice, and to emphasize that it stands far above human tradition.

In the Anglican Catechism of 1553 we find the student's response to a question regarding the nature of scriptural teaching stresses the preservation of the Word, thus its authority.

...Out of the holy words of GOD, which by the prophets and the beloved of almighty God are in the holy books published, to the eternal glory of his name, I learn the law and the threatening thereof; then the promises and the gospel of God. These things, first written by Moses and other men of God, have been preserved whole and uncorrupt, even to our age....²

In view of the turbulent times during which these words were written--the ebb and flow of bitter polemical challenges from their Roman Catholic antagonists--it is not surprising that the Anglican fathers officially put stress on the authority and

¹Two Liturgies, A.D. 1549, and A.D. 1552; with other Documents set forth by Authority in the reign of King Edward VI, ed., J. Ketley, P.S., p. 527.

²Ibid., p. 496.

purity of the Bible. Neither side questioned its divine origin.

In assessing Cranmer's theology, G.W. Bromiley comments:

It is not surprizing, perhaps, that he makes no effort to define the inspiration of the Scripture.... The pressing questions of our time were not an issue in the time of Cranmer.¹

¹G.W. Bromiley, Thomas Cranmer, Theologian (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), p. 17.

II. Interpretation and the Senses of Scripture

Illumination

In 1553 King Edward VI authorized the publication of a companion volume to the Book of Common Prayer, entitled A Prymmer or boke of private prayer nedeful to be used of al faythfull Christians. . . .¹ In the section on prayers appears a petition "For the true understanding of God's word," which reads:

O Lord, as thou alone art the author of the holy scriptures, so likewise can no man, although he be never so wise, politic and learned, understand them, except he be taught by the Holy Spirit, which alone is the Schoolmaster to lead the faithful into all truth. Vouchsafe therefore...to breathe into my heart thy blessed Spirit, which may renew the senses of my mind, open my wits, reveal unto me the true understanding of thy holy mysteries, and plant in me such a certain and infallible knowledge of thy truth, that no subtle persuasion of man's wisdom may pluck me from thy truth....²

This prayer, made before a Christian opened the sacred text, demonstrates the first and most basic principle of biblical interpretation for the Anglican reformers, namely, divine illumination of the reader's mind. The Bible was written to be understood, argued Cranmer. When one honestly did not understand the text, it was to be read again and again. "It is not possible," the Archbishop explained,

¹Two Liturgies...in the reign of Edward VI, P.S., pp. 357-484.

²*Ibid.*, p. 472.

that he which with earnest study and fervent desire applieth himself to the scriptures of God should ever be neglected of God; but although we lack a master to teach us, yet the Lord himself, entering our hearts from above, shall give light into our minds, and pour his bright beams into our reason and understanding, and open the things hid, and teach us things whereof we be ignorant.¹

An infallible revelation of God's truth served no purpose if the divine Spirit did not move within the reader to "make all things clear." Hooper explained:

The word of God is a means to teach truth...but God giveth and worketh the effect thereof. Meat is made to preserve the body; but if God giveth not strength, it misseth the purpose. ...The preacher preacheth God's word; but God openeth and teacheth the mystery thereof....²

This dynamic relationship between the text itself and the power to properly and profitably interpret and understand it, was discussed by Hooper in the exposition of the seventy-seventh Psalm. Clearly following Luther, the bishop argued for "two degrees of brightness" in the pages of the Bible. The first was in the outward letter, the simple understanding of the basic facts regarding God and His creation. It was quite possible for men to have such insight and yet not experience God's salvation.³ The "inner brightness" was a work of the Holy Spirit:

There is another clarity or brightness which is an inward understanding and spiritual knowledge and sight of God's truth; which no man hath but he that is possessed with the Spirit of God, that whatsoever he readeth in God's word himself...he understandeth it....⁴

¹Cranmer, P.S. vol. 2, p. 17; see also p. 121. See Hooper, P.S., vol. 2, p. 195.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 2, p. 341.

³Ibid., p. 330.

⁴Ibid., p. 331.

In 1525 Luther published De Servo Arbitrio, a response to the De Libero Arbitrio of Erasmus. In this work Luther developed the notion of "two clarities" in Scripture, ". . . one external and pertaining to the ministry of the Word, and the other located in the understanding of the heart."¹ The external clarity is objective in nature and "is in Scripture itself as it lies there." The internal clarity however is subjective according to Luther, and ". . . no man perceives one iota of what is in the Scriptures unless he has the Spirit of God."² It seems quite likely that Hooper bases his "two degrees of brightness" on Luther's widely read and influential book.

The senses of Scripture

As previously noted, the hermeneutical model of "four senses" in Scripture, which enjoyed such widespread popularity in the medieval period, began to lose influence in sixteenth century England. Colet and Erasmus paid only token assent to the "senses," while placing primary emphasis on the literal sense as the basis for all exegesis. In Tyndale's writings the fourfold division is barely evident. The Anglican reformers do not recognize it at all.

The new exegetical chord, sounded by Christian exponents of the "New Learning" in England, Germany, and Switzerland was:

¹Luther, De Servo Arbitrio, ed. and trans. P. Watson, Library of Christian Classics edition, Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 112; see also W.A., vol. 18, pp. 609, 653.

²Ibid.

Seek the one true meaning of the text in question. The emphasis was upon the simplicity and singularity of interpretation. As Ridley expressed it: ". . . my mind is and ever shall be (God willing), to set forth sincerely the true sense and meaning of God's most holy word. . . ." ¹ As with Colet and Tyndale, the Anglicans saw the true meaning rising out of the literal sense of the text. Thus the literal sense included the sub-categories of apocalyptic, parabolic, typological, metaphoric, and poetic, under the general phrase "the figurative sense."

The pressing issue in regards to the senses of Scripture among the English divines was that of determining whether a passage was to be taken as "proper speech," or "figurative speech." This question was at the heart of an angry and prolonged debate on the language of the Lord's Supper, championed for the reformers by Ridley and Cranmer, and for the Roman Catholic party, by the articulate bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner.

Both Ridley and Cranmer entered the arena of theological debate rather late in their careers. Cranmer was suited by temperament and intellect to a quiet life within the walls of academia. G.W. Bromiley writes that Cranmer, ". . . in his own day . . . had certainly been one of the ablest and most promising of the younger Cambridge theologians." ² A chance meeting with two of the

¹Ridley, P.S., p. 14. Perhaps Luther expressed this desire best in saying, "...we must everywhere stick to the simple, pure, and natural sense of the words that accords with the rules of grammar and the normal use of language as God has created it in man...." On the Bondage of the Will, Library of Christian Classics edition, ed. and trans. Watson, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 221.

²G.W. Bromiley, Thomas Cranmer Theologian (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 1.

King's intimates in the summer of 1529 proved to be the turning point in young Cranmer's life. The issue discussed over dinner was the legality of the King's divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Cranmer's proposal that such a question could best be resolved by debate at the leading universities, proved to be especially appealing to the frustrated monarch. Thomas was called to court shortly thereafter to formulate his views in writing. Winning increasing favour with Henry, he was appointed to serve as ambassador to the Imperial Court, with the specific task of enlisting the support of the German Lutherans. When William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, died in 1532, Cranmer was quite unexpectedly recalled to England and nominated for the vacant office.¹ On March 30, 1533, the young cleric was installed as the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

Cranmer's career can be divided into three general periods. The first of these, 1529-1539, was a decade of unparalleled change within the English Church. The center of ecclesiastical authority had shifted from the Roman Pope to the English Crown. Numerous shrines were removed, and alleged abuses of papal power were ameliorated. Perhaps the most significant step forward during this decade of advance, and one with which Cranmer had a consuming interest, was the authorization of a vernacular Bible. In August of 1537 the archbishop came across a copy

¹It appears as though Cranmer felt some regret over the prospect of high ecclesiastical office. In his examination before Brook~~s~~ he recalled "...feeling in himself a great inability to such a promotion, and very sorry to leave his study." In fact, Cranmer remained abroad for half a year after the official summons, hoping that the King would appoint someone else in his place. See Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 223.

of Matthew's Bible containing the translations of Tyndale supplemented by the work of Miles Coverdale. Cranmer wrote a preface to the Bible and sent it to the King for approval.¹ Thomas Cromwell, allied with Cranmer in the cause of the English Bible, was instrumental in having the book placed in all parish churches. Thus the dream of Erasmus and Tyndale finally became reality in England.

The second block of time, running from 1539 until the death of Henry VIII in January of 1547, was one of Roman Catholic resurgence in the English Church. During this time Cranmer found himself often forced into a defensive posture. For the King, friendships with the Emperor had become more advantageous than maintaining good political relations with the Lutherans. When Cromwell, in an attempt to procure the German Protestant Anne of Cleves as a wife for Henry, failed to please the Monarch, he found himself fallen from royal graces and not long thereafter the lord chamberlain was executed. Not only had the Archbishop lost a powerful ally in the cause of Church Reform, but Cranmer was soon faced with the doctrinally reactionary "Six Articles." His vocal opposition to the "whip with six strings" led to charges of heresy from the traditionalists, and it was only the King's friendship which spared Cranmer from sharing Cromwell's fate. New editions of the Great Bible ceased after 1541 as Stephen Gardiner and his Roman Catholic party exercised increasing influence over ecclesiastical polity. Two years later Tyndale's version was pronounced unfit reading material for some classes of people. To

¹Ibid., p. 344.

Cranmer this period must have seemed particularly vexing as many of the gains made earlier in the cause of reform were surrendered.

In the third period, the reign of King Edward VI (1547-1553), the tide turned for the Archbishop, and Cranmer assumed almost total control in matters of religious reform and theology. Within one year of Edward's ascension, the Bible along with Erasmus' Paraphrase was made available in English. The first book of English homilies was circulated with the proviso that at least once each quarter a sermon was to be read from the parish pulpit in English. The Gospel and Epistle readings in the Mass were to be read in the vernacular. Most dramatically, the cup was to be given to the laity.

With the full blessings of the Council of Regency, Cranmer then turned his attention to his most enduring monument, liturgical reform. The first draft of an English Prayer Book was completed toward the end of 1548. Its publication was to plunge Cranmer into a protracted eucharistic debate which served to hone his agile mind in the art of theological parry and riposte. Peter Martyr, an exile in England, described the scene for friend Martin Bucer:

"There is so much contention among our people about the Eucharist, that every corner is full of it. The popish party til now were willing to traduce...[Cranmer] as a man ignorant of theology, and as being only conversant with matters of government; but believe me, he has shown himself so mighty a theologian against them... [that] they are compelled, against their inclination, to acknowledge his learning, and power and dexterity in debate.¹

¹P. Martyr, Original Letters, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 469-470.

This first Prayer Book was not received well on either side of the issue. Many Protestants felt it retained too much of medieval order and ceremony, while the traditionalists were offended with change in any form. Perhaps most distasteful to Cranmer was the assertion by Gardiner that the doctrine of a real presence could be found in the new communion service. This most directly prompted the Archbishop to begin work on a second and more successful Edwardian Prayer Book. It also led him to write The True and Catholic Doctrine of the Lord's Supper.¹ Gardiner soon produced a rejoinder to which Cranmer responded with An Answer unto a crafty and Sophistical Cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner.² It is in these polemical pieces that we truly see Cranmer doing the work of an exegete. It is in a way unfortunate that the exercise of his prowess in interpretation was confined to so narrow a doctrinal issue. As Bromiley writes: "These writings on the eucharist are Cranmer's only detailed and systematic contribution to technical theology."³

By his own confession Cranmer was indebted to Nicholas Ridley for his understanding of the Lord's Supper. In an examination before bishop James Brooks, Cranmer was accused of vacillating between Lutheran and Zwinglian positions on the Eucharist. To this charge he replied: "I grant that then I believed otherwise than I do now; and so I did, until my lord of London, doctor Ridley did confer with me, and by sundry persuasions and authorities of

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 1*-88*.

²Ibid., pp. 1-367.

³Bromiley, Thomas Cranmer, Theologian, xxii.

doctors drew me quite from my opinion."¹ As to when this encounter between the two divines began we cannot speak with certainty. Ridley, a product of Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees, and after a time of study at the Sorbonne, where he returned as senior proctor, was the true academic of the early Anglican Reformers. In 1540, after having served as chaplain to the University and Public Orator, Ridley was named Master of Pembroke and awarded the degree Doctor of Divinity.

As early as 1534, the year he received his Bachelor of Divinity degree, Ridley was beginning to show his reformed colours when he signed a decree against papal supremacy. It was some time after this that he began to question the doctrine of transubstantiation.² In his Oxford disputation Ridley credited his conversion on the matter of the eucharist to his reading of Ratramnus' de Corpore et Sanguine Domini.³ "This Bertram," Ridley recalled,

was the first that pulled me by the ear, and that first brought me from the common error of the Romish Church, and caused me to search more diligently and exactly both the Scriptures and the writings of the old ecclesiastical fathers in the matter.⁴

In 1537 Ridley became chaplain to the Archbishop and we can

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 218.

²Ridley, P.S., p. 159.

³Ratramnus, who was referred to as "Bertram" during the Reformation, was a ninth century monk of Corbie or Corvey, in France. At the request of Charles the Bald, Ratramnus wrote a tract on the eucharist against a position held by his superior, Paschasius Radbertus. See Migne P.L., vol. 121, cols. 113-170. An English translation of this work, by William Hugh, was published in 1548.

⁴Ridley, P.S., p. 206.

assume the two men began to interact on the eucharistic question. Ridley's rise in the Church hierarchy was meteoric in the 1540's. In rapid succession he was made chaplain to the King, and prebend at both Canterbury and Westminster. By 1547 he was bishop of Rochester, and three years later, bishop of London.

That Ridley exerted a profound influence upon Cranmer during these years cannot be doubted. The Roman Catholic party considered Ridley to be the linchpin of the Anglican reformers. In the last examination by the commissioners in September of 1555, Brooks, bishop of Gloucester, meaning to cast aspersions upon the opposition stated: "Latimer leaneth to Cranmer, Cranmer to Ridley, and Ridley to the singularity of his own wit."¹ When trying to trace this influence we are hampered by the fact that of all the major English reformers, Ridley's extant literary output is the smallest. Most of his theological writings were composed while he languished in prison, and lack the detailed argument possible when one has access to grammatical and theological resources.² We must therefore depend upon mere fragments of Ridley's theological thought.

The interpretation of figurative passages

As mentioned above, the primary concern of the Anglican reformers was to distinguish "proper speech" from "figurative speech." Confusion at this first step could be disastrous. Cranmer defined the problem:

¹Ibid., p. 283.

²Ibid., p. 211.

...In words that be altered from their proper signification there is great diligence and heed to be taken. And specially we must beware that we take not literally any thing that is spoken figuratively, nor contrariwise, we must not take for a figure anything that is spoken properly.¹

Hooper reminded his readers that man's fall, condemnation, and death, were,

...wrought by the false interpretation of Scripture..., because Adam and Eve took God's Word in the wrong sense. Thus being instructed let us beware of glosses and false interpretations...and believe no man except he speak the Word of God truly and in the sense that God meant it.²

Here we have the heart of the issue. How does one determine the sense that God meant? Protestant hermeneutics is built upon the presupposition that the Bible is basically a clear revelation of God which can be understood by anyone who sincerely seeks to know the truth. As Luther wrote:

...If Scripture is obscure or ambiguous, what point was there in God's giving it to us? Are we not obscure and ambiguous enough without having our obscurity, ambiguity, and darkness augmented for us from heaven?³

Satan has used the argument that the Bible is difficult to understand, Luther went on, as a "phantasmagoria," to "...frighten men away from reading the Sacred Writ. . . ."4 In his introduction to the vernacular Bible of 1539, the edition bearing his name, Cranmer expressed the same conviction in positive terms:

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 114-115; see also, Ridley, P.S., p. 21.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 110-111.

³Luther, *Bondage of the Will*, p. 110

⁴*Ibid.*
Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 120; see also Ridley, P.S. pp. 13-14.

The Holy Ghost hath so ordered and attempered the scriptures that in them as well publicans, fishers, and shepherds may find their edification, as great doctors their erudition. ...The apostles and prophets wrote their books so that their special intent and purpose might be understood [sic] and perceived of every reader....¹

Yet both Luther and Cranmer were quick to stress that some passages were more difficult to understand than others.² In regards to the figurative passages especially, care was to be taken, and helpful guidelines were to be followed. For the Anglicans, as for most Protestant reformers, the foundational principle for figurative interpretation was laid down by Augustine. If a passage read literally produced love and edification, it was "proper speech." On the other hand, if it seemed to command that which was patently wrong or evil, or if it forbade something that was good, it was to be taken figuratively.³ Both Cranmer and Ridley were pleased with the example Augustine chose to illustrate his point:

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 120; see also Ridley, P.S., pp. 13-14.

²Luther, Bondage of the Will, pp. 110-111.

³Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, 3: 4, 5, 10, 16; see Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 115; Ridley, P.S., p. 21. It is true of course that Augustine applied the term "figurative" more broadly than did the English reformers. The African father took pains to define his terms carefully. "Proper speech" was that "used to designate those things on account of which they were instituted; thus we say bos [ox] when we mean an animal...." Figurative language however is used when "...we designate by a literal sign... something else; thus we say "ox" and by that symbol understand... an evangelist, as is signified in the Scripture (I Corinthians 9:9)." De Doctrina Christiana, 2:10. With these statements the Anglicans would be in perfect accord. Augustine, however, in illustrating figurative passages, often stressed the multiple levels of allegorical interpretation so common to his time. Christ's exhortation to be "wise as serpents" he suggested, carried the metaphorical admonition that we, like a snake, should expose our whole body in order to protect our head, Jesus Christ, i.e., we must be willing to present our bodies to those who would persecute us rather than renounce our head. Ibid. 2:16. As we shall see the English reformers were uniformly negative when it came to allegorical interpretation, and made selective use of Augustine's examples.

Now this saying of Christ, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall have no life in you,' seemeth to command an heinous and wicked thing: therefore it is a figure, commanding us to be partakers of Christ's passion.¹

A second principle, which comes through clearly in the Anglicans, involves listening to more than mere words. To comprehend the true sense of a passage one must ask, What did he mean by the terms he chose? "This is the mother of many errors," wrote Cranmer, "both in interpretation of scriptures, and also in understanding ancient writers, when the mind and intent of him that maketh a similitude is not considered. . . ." ² The Archbishop is suggesting here that the reader view the passage through the eyes of the original author in order to discern the purpose he was making of the words employed. As Hooper put it,

...There must be as good heed given unto the meaning of the words as unto the words [themselves]; or else they illuminate not the conscience, but rather darken the conscience, and lead it into all false doctrine and detestable heresies.³

Cranmer displayed such sensitivity to meaning in discussing the common biblical device, the negative of comparison.

[This]...fashion of speech is commonly used, not only in the scripture...but in all manner of languages. For when two things be compared together, in the extolling of the more excellent, or abasing of the more vile, is many times used a negative by comparison, which nevertheless is no pure negative....⁴

Choosing Psalm 22:6 the Archbishop illustrated his point. "By

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 114-115; Ridley, P.S., p. 21.

²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 181, italics mine.

³Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 144.

⁴Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 313.

this negative [I am a worm and no man] he denied not utterly that Christ was a man; but the more vehemently to express the great humiliation of Christ he said...that he might rather be called a worm than a man."¹ Turning then to the Apostle Paul for examples, Cranmer cited Romans 7:17; "It is no more that I do it, but sin dwelleth in me;" and I Corinthians 1:17; "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel;" and I Corinthians 2:4; "My speech and preaching was not in words of men's persuasion;" and finally Galatians 6:14, "God forbid that I should rejoice in anything, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In all these sentences, St. Paul...meant not clearly to deny these things, which undoubtedly were all true; but he meant that in comparison of other greater things these smaller were not so much to be esteemed....²

When Peter wrote that the dress of women "should not be that outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel (I Peter 3:3);

...he intended not utterly to forbid all braiding of hair, all gold and costly apparel to all women...but he meant hereby clearly to condemn all pride and excess in apparel, and to move all women that they should study to deck their souls inwardly with all virtues, and not be curious outwardly to deck and adorn their bodies with sumptuous apparel.³

Cranmer concluded by pointing out that Christ often employed similar expressions, such as "Call no man father upon the earth," or "Fear not them that kill the body," or "I came not to send

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 314.

peace upon the earth," in all of which the intent of the words was not the same as their literal meaning.¹ The text of Scripture was not to be handled with a simplistic "wooden literalism." The interpreter was to always be on guard that he never take the "letter" without the "sense." As Hooper put it: ". . . Although the letter be well known, and the sound thereof seemeth to be plain, yet the sense is not so common or so manifest as the letter soundeth."²

The next question to be faced in dealing with figurative language was simply, How could one determine the genuine intent of the author? At this point the English divines fell back to the general principle that Scripture was its own best interpreter. Behind this statement lay the presupposition that the Word of God could not contradict itself, but as Latimer wrote, "Though many scriptures have diverse expositions. . . , yet they all pertain to one end and effect, and they be all alike."³ "No one place [may] be taken contrary to many places," insisted Hooper.⁴ "Better it is to understand one place by many, than many should be made false by the mistaking of one."⁴ Thus the true sense of a passage, or a figure, would be consistent with the clear teaching of the whole revelation. Apparent contradictions in the biblical text were the result of insufficient regard to

¹Ibid.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 2, p. 333.

³Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 198.

⁴Hooper, P.S., vol. 2, p. 333.

⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 157.

the context or "circumstance" in which the author wrote.¹

A case study: The eucharistic debate

These principles for the determination of the meaning of figurative language in Scripture are nicely illustrated for us in the polemical debate which raged in England in the reign of Edward VI, over the meaning of the eucharistic passages and specifically of "This is my body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me," (I Corinthians 11:24). As we have noted above, the principals in the exchange were Ridley and Cranmer for the Anglicans, and Stephen Gardiner for the Roman Catholics.

Generally speaking the English reformers approached the question of the proper interpretation of Christ's words "This is my body," along the lines laid down by Zwingli and Oecolampadius at the famous Marburg Colloquy of October 1529. In this early Protestant "summit meeting" the German and Swiss schools wrangled in the continental "supper strife." Although Luther was the opponent at Marburg, and his cause was consubstantiation not transubstantiation, the arguments presented on both sides are remarkably similar to those used by the Anglicans and Gardiner more than twenty years later.

At the heart of both debates was the relationship between Hoc est corpus meum, and the "spiritual feeding" of John six.

¹ This point was made first by Luther who explained: "I admit, of course, that there are many texts in the Scriptures that are obscure and abstruse, not because of the majesty of their subject matter, but because of our ignorance of their vocabulary and grammar. The subject matter of Scripture...is all quite accessible.... If the words are obscure in one place, yet they are plain in another; and it is one and the same thing." Bondage of the Will, pp. 110-111.

It was this portion of the text (John 6:51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also that I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh,") that Zwingli referred to when he goaded Luther saying: "This passage is going to break your neck."¹ Briefly the Swiss argument ran as follows: The ambiguity of Christ's statement "This is my body" is made clear when it is read along with John six. When Christ speaks, argued Oecolampadius, "...of spiritual eating, he separates it from bodily eating."² Zwingli continued,

It is necessary to compare one Scripture passage with another. Even if we do not have [a passage that says] 'This is my body,' we do have [a text] which leads us away from the bodily eating....Hence it follows that in the Supper Christ did not give himself in bodily fashion.³

Cranmer and Ridley follow the Swiss arguments:

Truth it is indeed, that the words be as plain as may be spoken; but the sense is not so plain, [yet] it is manifest to every man that weigheth substantially the circumstances of the place.⁴

To understand this portion of the Gospel record (This is my body) it was necessary to collate all such passages into a meaningful whole from which the parts could be accurately interpreted.

...Although the evangelists...do not fully express the words in this sense (figurative sense), yet adjoining the sixth chapter of John...to the circumstances of the text of the three evangelists reciting Christ's last Supper, the whole matter is fully gathered.⁵

¹Zwingli, Luther's Works, vol. 38, p. 26.

²Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³Ibid., p. 20.

⁴Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 103.

⁵Ibid., p. 37.

Luther's response was to charge the Swiss with begging the question. Why, he put it to them, must one assume that while speaking of spiritual feeding, Christ meant to exclude all bodily eating?¹

Whenever God speaks to us, faith is required, and such faith means "eating." If however, he adds bodily eating, we are bound to obey. In faith we eat this body which is given for us.²

For Luther at least, the burden of proof rested with the opposition to prove that Christ did not mean bodily eating literally.

Gardiner followed the same tack as did Luther in answering the English reformers. He admitted that Cranmer's description of "spiritual feeding on Christ," with a few words excepted, was ". . . good teaching and wholesome exhortation . . .," which contained ". . . good matter not well applied."³ The Catholic Church, Gardiner explained, interprets "hunger of Christ," and "spiritual refreshing in Christ," as with reference to Christ's passion and death and man's regeneration.⁴ But such a statement does not in any way contradict the fact that Christ ordered his followers to feed, in the sacrament upon his very body ". . . not only by his body and blood, but also with his body and blood," to be received ". . . with their faith and with their mouth also."⁵

We see here that both Luther and Gardiner press the point

¹Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 38, p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 21.

³Gardiner, in Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 37.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

that "spiritual eating" as described in John six, does not exclude bodily eating, but rather is seen as a complement to it.

A second contention advanced by the Swiss and English was that the Bible was full of similar figures of speech which no man would regard as literal. Cranmer wrote:

And although some of his parables Christ opened to the people, some to his apostles only, yet some he opened to neither of both, as can appear, but left them to be considered by the discretion of the hearers. And when Christ called Herod a fox, Judas a devil, himself a door, a way, a vine, a well; neither he nor an evangelist expounded these words, nor gave a warning to the hearers that he spoke in figures: for every man that had any manner of sense or reason, might well perceive that these sentences could not be true in the plain form of the words, as they were spoken.¹

Luther took the position that figurative interpretation was only correct if the text forced one to that conclusion. "We ought...to shun as deadliest poison," he wrote, "every trope that Scripture itself does not force upon us."² Nevertheless he admitted that the Bible contained many metaphors and frequently made use of figurative language. Such figures, however, were only to be found in general sentences, and not demonstrative (descriptive) constructions like "This is my body." In such cases the interpreter must prove that the words are to be understood metaphorically.³ Admitting that Christ's words do contain a "synecdoche," he explained, "This figure is in general

¹Ibid., pp. 36-37. For a similar statement of Zwingli, see Luther's Works, vol. 38, p. 17.

²Luther, Bondage of the Will, p. 221.

³Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 38, p. 17. A general sentence is one used to illustrate a function or relationship, whereas a demonstrative, or descriptive sentence deals with specific statements of fact.

use, and the text calls for it. A metaphor abolishes the content altogether: e.g., as when you understand 'body' as 'figure of a body'; synecdoche does not do this."¹ In his Confession Concerning Christ's Supper, written a year before the Marburg Colloquy, Luther was more explicit:

The grammarians and all Christian teachers forbid us ever to depart from the old, customary meaning of a word and accept a new meaning [i.e. metaphorical], unless the text and the same sense require it, or unless it is irrefutably proved by other passages of Scripture. Otherwise no text, meaning, expression, or language would remain definite.²

Note the reason Luther is so cautious about figurative language. If the subjective element involved in figurative interpretation were exercised too often doctrine would lose its objective foundation.

Gardiner's response to this issue again shows a remarkably similar approach to that of Luther. He too was ready to admit that figures were common in the Scriptures. "But," he added,

there is a difference between speeches of God's ordinances and commandments, and otherwise. For if in the understanding of God's ordinances and commandments figures may be often received, truth shall by allegories be shortly subverted, and all our religion reduced to signification....No man denieth the use of figurative speeches in Christ's Supper, but such as be equal with plain proper speech, or be expounded by other evangelists in plain speech.³

Both men, Luther and Gardiner, arguing from different doctrinal bases, point out the same potential problem inherent in interpreting declarative sentences in a figurative sense: If one

¹Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 38, p. 30.

²Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 37, p. 176.

³Gardiner, Crammer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 137.

admits a metaphor in a definitive, demonstrative sentence, then the door is opened to doctrinal subjectivism.

Ridley summarized the problem as follows:

But some say: if we shall admit figures in doctrine; then shall all the articles of our faith, by figures and allegories, shortly be transformed and unloosed.

His answer:

I say, it is [a] like fault, and even the same, to deny the figure where the place so requireth [it] to be understood, as vainly to make it a figurative speech, which is to be understood in its proper signification.¹

Cranmer added that Augustine's rules for determining the presence of figures as found in De Doctrina Christiana, applied to passages including those which gave ordinances and commandments, and specifically the great Father chose Hoc est corpus meum as an example of the need for figurative handling.²

Ridley nicely summarizes the Anglican position, once again quoting Augustine:

'The circumstances of the scriptures' saith he 'lighten the scriptures; and so one scripture doth expound another, to a man that is studious, well willing, and often calling upon God in continual prayer, who giveth his Holy Spirit to them that desire it of him.' The circumstances of the scriptures, the analogy and proportion of the sacraments, and the testimony of the faithful fathers, ought to rule us in taking the meaning of the holy scripture touching the sacrament. These do most effectively and plainly prove a figurative speech in the words of the Lord's supper.³

In these debates we see the major principles of figurative

¹Ridley, P.S., p. 21.

²Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 137; Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, III: 16.

³Ridley, P.S., p. 205.

interpretation demonstrated: 1) that Scripture is its own best interpreter, and thus 2) the obscure is to be brought to light by the clear. 3) The revelation is self-consistent, and therefore, since contradiction is impossible, the key to the understanding of a difficult text lies in the clear teaching of the whole. Finally, 4) words must never be accepted at their face value, but must rather be weighed by the circumstances of their composition, and by the context in which they are used. These exegetical arguments were intertwined with various doctrinal issues (such as the physical locality of Christ's resurrection body), and with the English especially, both sides attempted to muster a massive bulk of patristic reference and quotation in support of their respective positions.

If there is one area of figurative interpretation in which the English reformers are distinctive, it would be in their sensitivity to the meaning of terms with an emphasis on the intent of the original human author.

It is only right to remember that these convictions regarding the eucharistic passages were not held and promoted in an atmosphere of tranquility. When their greatest fears were realized in the death of Edward VI in 1553, the reformers continued to maintain their position on the Lord's Supper. This led in part to their excommunication as heretics, in the case of Ridley, Cranmer, and Latimer, on 20 April, 1554. For a year they languished in various prisons, until being summoned to Oxford in April of 1555, to be examined on their doctrine. In these Oxford disputations the three men held to their

convictions despite the knowledge that heresy had become a capital offense. For Ridley and Latimer the end came on 16 October of the same year. Cranmer's sentence, however, was delayed in the successful attempt to force him to recant. Weakened by illness and broken in spirit, the degraded Archbishop put his hand to six separate recantations.¹ It is reasonable to conclude that these were not his own compositions, but were presented to him with a veiled promise of release. In the fifth recantation, after denouncing Luther and Zwingli as heretics, the text reads: "Jam quod ad sacramenta attinet, credo et colo in sacramento eucharistiae verum Christi corpus et sanguinem sub speciebus panis et vini verissime citra ullum tropum et figuram contenta, conversis et transubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem Redemptoris divina potentia."² It must have given his antagonists great satisfaction to see the sixty-seven year old reformer confess a position so contrary to his long held convictions. Cranmer died in Oxford on 21 March, 1556, after hurrying to the stake, and thrusting the hand that had betrayed him into the flames first.

Allegorical and Typological exegesis

As noted earlier, the English divines were generally antagonistic toward allegorical interpretation. Again and again in their writings the opposition is denounced for "juggling"

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 563-565.

²Ibid., p. 564.

the text--twisting it to fit or support a particular doctrinal position. Hugh Latimer, the most popular preacher among the Anglicans considered here, was particularly vehement against those who wrest the Scripture from its simple sense. In January of 1548 Latimer preached at St. Paul's Cross continuing the theme he had developed in two previous sermons, namely, the parable of the "Sower." Comparing the "husbandman" or "Ploughman," as he called him, to a preacher, Latimer commented upon the verse from the ninth chapter of Luke which reads, "No man that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is apt for the kingdom of God."

That is to say, let no preacher be negligent in doing his office. Albeit this is one of the places that hath been racked....And I have been one of them myself that hath racked it, I cry God mercy for it; and have been one of them that have believed and expounded it against religious persons that would forsake their order...and go out of their cloisture: whereas indeed it toucheth not monkery...but it is directly spoken of diligent preaching of the word of God.¹

The allusion to "racking" the text in this case referred to using such a passage to support the doctrine of priestly celibacy. Perhaps Latimer was especially sensitive to such a misuse of Scripture, since, as admitted, he once practiced it.

Latimer, born in Leicester in 1490 or 1491, went up to Clare Hall, Cambridge when he was fourteen years of age. Receiving his B.A. in 1510, and his masters degree four years later, the young Latimer was no friend of the Reformation, although he was not opposed to the "New Learning." Upon obtaining his B.D. in 1524, he delivered a biting attack on the theology of Philipp

¹Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 59-60.

Melanchthon. Shortly after that day Thomas Bilney invited the young divine to "hear his confession." That interview changed Latimer's life. Leaving his old studies he began to pursue "true theology." Like Cranmer, the fact that he publically supported the divorce of his King from Catherine of Aragon gave his clerical career a tremendous boost. Latimer was soon made the royal chaplain, and was given a benefice in Wiltshire. Although the reformed tenor of his preaching caused continued complaint from local priests, Latimer, with the support of Cranmer, was awarded the see of Worcester in 1535. He held that post for four years, resigning in 1539 over the institution of the "Six Articles." Unwilling to moderate his views or restrain himself in expressing them publically, Latimer was incarcerated in the Tower in the later years of Henry VIII's reign. In 1547 with the crowning of the new king, the reformer refused a reappointment as bishop, desiring rather to be an active preacher. Residing with Cranmer at Lambeth palace, Latimer preached at least two sermons on every Sunday, often with young King Edward in attendance. It was during this period of freedom and reform that Latimer preached his most dramatic and effective sermons, earning the popular title, "the Apostle of England."

On 12 April, 1549, Latimer preached before Edward VI on the Gospel narrative of the miraculous draught of fish from Luke chapter five.¹ This sermon presents a fine example of Latimer's colourful prose, his sermonic exegesis, and his disdain of allegorical speculation.

¹Ibid., pp. 194-215.

The message began with a discussion of the many sins of the London populace. He described two recent murders to illustrate such moral depravity, the last of which resulted ⁱⁿ a fight over a prostitute. This presented the preacher with the chance to comment upon "whoredom."

How God is dishonored by the whoredom in this city of London; yea the Bank, when it stood, was never so common! If it be true that is told, it is a marvel that it doth not sink, and that the earth gapeth not and swalloweth it up.¹

Such a state of degradation, suggested Latimer, resulted in part because "young gentlemen" had given up noble occupations like archery for "dicing," "glossing,"² "gulling," and "whoring."³

Following this extended introduction, Latimer finally got to the exposition of his text. The selection of the passage was a response to a book by Cardinal Reginald Pole entitled Pro Ecclesiasticae Unitatis Defensione, in which the author used the Lucan story to press the primacy of the papal office. Latimer began by putting the incident into context. The people were crowding Jesus because in the previous chapter He had healed the sick. The reformer paused to note how it was Christ's practice to shun glory and get on with God's work, adding, "Is it not a marvellous thing, that our unpreaching prelates can read this place, and yet preach no more than they do?"⁴ Latimer then added a number of historical illustrations to impress upon his hearers the importance of

¹Ibid., p. 196.

²lawn bowling.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 199.

preaching, how that Satan is the great enemy of such work, and why it is so necessary to remain quiet during a sermon.

Getting back to the text, Latimer addressed the question, Why did Jesus preach from a boat? The answer was simple, "... he was like to be thrust into the pond of the people that came unto him."² Secondly. Why Simon's boat? Pole, and other papists, suggests Latimer "...will make a mystery of it: they will pick out the supremacy of the bishop of Rome in Peter's boat."³ His explanation is simple: "It stood nearer for him, he saw a better seat. A good natural reason."⁴

The next point the preacher made was that Christ taught from a humble seated position--a good rebuke for the prelates of England who made so much of a proper pulpit. This was followed by several pithy examples of ecclesiastical pride.

Having fed the souls of those who came to hear Him, Latimer taught, Christ then took care to provide for their bodies. Alluding to an interpretation by Dionysius Carthusianus⁵ in which Jesus' words to Peter, "Launch out into the deep," having the singular verb form, were contrasted with the plural form of "Loose your nets," addressed to the disciples; thus indicating the supremacy of Peter, Latimer replied:

¹Ibid., p. 204.

²Ibid., p. 205.

³Ibid., p. 205.

⁴Ibid.

⁵This prolific author produced commentaries on all the books of the Bible. He died in 1471.

I dare say there is never a wherryman at Westminster-bridge but he can answer to this, and give a natural reason for it. He knoweth that one man is able to shove the boat, but one man was not able to cast out the nets; and therefore he said the plural number... 'Loose your nets;' and he said in the singular number to Peter, 'Launch out your boat.' ...This would the wherryman say, and that with better reason, than to make such a mystery of it....¹

The remainder of the sermon dealt with the truth taught in this simple narrative story: God is the provider of all things necessary for life, yet man has a responsibility to work that he may eat.

The general practice of the English reformers, in interpreting non-figurative passages, is to find the simple literal sense of a text and from that extract general principles of theological or moral truth. When Hooper, in his commentary on Jonah, interpreted the prophet's three day sojourn in the belly of the great fish, he put the emphasis on the simple literal sense and the principles taught by such an experience. Only in his last sentence did he refer to any typological significance:

Of this we learn that God helpeth not by and by the afflicted, but exerciseth them in their troubles. First because he may the better humble them, and bring them to a true knowledge of their faults. ...Farther, his mighty power is better declared....Last of all, this time of Jonah's being in the whale's body was a type and figure of Christ being in the heart of the earth three days and nights.²

Latimer did, on occasion, indulge in spiritualisation which was akin to Tyndale's "illustrative allegory." When you hear or read stories like that of a leper whom Christ cleansed, he wrote,

¹Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 211.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 94.

". . . you must consider that they are done for our sake, and for our instruction and teaching."¹ You must look for "...eternal things which are set before your eyes by such stories; and so we must apply them to ourselves."² As his body was leprous, so we are lepers in our souls. His healing came through Christ, ". . . so we must be healed by him, or else perish eternally. So I say, we must apply the scriptures to us, and take out some good things to strengthen our faith withal. . . ."³

Both Bradford and Latimer adopted a spiritualised interpretation of Ecclesiastes 11:3, "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if a tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Latimer dealt with the text in a sermon in which he mentioned the death of a conspirator against King Edward VI:

By the falling of the tree is signified the death of a man: if he fall into the south he shall be saved; for the south is hot, and betokeneth charity or salvation; if he fall in the north, in the cold infidelity, he shall be damned. There are but two states, the state of salvation and the state of damnation, and he shall rise in the same.⁴

Bradford's reference came in connection with the question of prayer for the dead. He wrote that "...as men die, so shall they arise. If in faith in the Lord towards the south, then

¹Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 170-171.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 162.

they need no prayers. . . .if in unbelief without the Lord to the north, then are they past all help."¹

In Hooper's exposition of selected Psalms he occasionally stepped over that narrow boundary which separates "figurative" and "allegorical" interpretation. His treatment of the twenty-third Psalm reveals several examples of this tendency. He approached the passage by explaining that it contained "allegories" and "translations" which were in effect metaphors from nature. The figures of a "rod" and a "staff" and a "table set" he treated in a metaphorical way which is perfectly consistent with the poetic imagery. When however, Hooper touched upon the phrase "Thou anointest my head with oil," he began to drift from metaphor into allegory proper. The "oil" pictured the Holy Spirit, David's intent being that ". . . God hath illuminated his spirit with the Holy Ghost. And so . . . his head [is] taken from his mind, and oil from the Holy Ghost."² In the words "pleasant pastures," David intended the "riches of doctrine," while the "still waters" referred to the "plenteous floods of the Holy Ghost," and the "sweet waters of the holy scripture."³ The same tendency toward allegory occurs in Hooper's treatment of the seventy-third Psalm. In explaining the text "My feet were almost gone, and my treadings had well nigh slipped," he wrote:

¹Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 279.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 2, p. 229.

³Ibid., p. 277.

By 'feet' he understandeth the 'mind' and by the 'treadings' he understandeth the judgment and wisdom of of mind. As foul and slippery ways be dangerous for the feet, so be the words of God to the mind that is not illuminated with the light of God's word.¹

Such examples are atypical and are rare indeed. Much more characteristic of Hooper and the other Anglican bishops is the following excerpt from a rebuttal to an argument put forward by Gardiner regarding the proper understanding of the sacrament:

I marvel my lord is so full of allegories, and speaketh nothing of the text; when an allegory proveth nothing, but is used to declare the thing that we would prove. Let him first prove his position by scripture, and then I will admit the figurative locution, as truth shall force me.²

Allegories and metaphorical language were useful by way of illustration, but solid doctrinal truth was only to be based upon the simple literal sense of the Scripture.

Typological interpretation was not a major emphasis of the early English reformers.³ Generally they viewed the rites and sacrifices of the Old Testament as "figures and shadows" of Christ's life and work.⁴ Cranmer especially, was ever quick to compare Old Testament types with New Testament sacraments. ". . . The sacrifices of the old law were prognostications and figures of the same then to come, as our sacraments be figures

¹Ibid., p. 297.

²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 244.

³G.W. Bromiley, Baptism and the Anglican Reformers, discusses the various types employed as signs of baptism in the English Reformation, but of the early reformers only Bradford is mentioned. See pp. 33f., esp. p. 40 note 4.

⁴Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 488; see also Cranmer, P.S. vol. 1, pp. 60, 351.

and demonstrations of the same now passed."¹ The Old Testament prophets he argued, promised a saviour "...which the sacraments of that time testified until his coming...."²

It was Bradford who furnished some interesting typological innovations. When King David, along with the Cherethites and Pelethites cross over the brook Kidron in the time of Absalom's conspiracy (II Samuel 15:18 and 23), they prefigured that same journey taken by Christ and his disciples.³ The door of the tabernacle, where acceptable sacrifices were offered to God (Leviticus 17:4), prefigured Christ.⁴ Finally, Judas, Bradford proposed, was a figure of the Jewish nation rejecting the Messiah.⁵

As with Tyndale, the bedrock of interpretation for these men was the literal sense. That sense was moreover practically synonymous with what they termed "the intent of the author." Thus a writer could employ figurative, poetic speech, as well as straightforward prose, and still be well within the literal sense.

Since their ministerial goals were more practical than theoretical, they looked for general precepts in the biblical text which could be effectively applied to sixteenth century English concerns. Allegory and typology were treated as tangential issues and not afforded significant attention.

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 348.

²Ibid.

³Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 254.

⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 23.

⁵Ibid., p. 211.

III. Grammatico-Historical Method

Turning our attention now to the very tools of exegesis we shall note the linguistic abilities of the English reformers as well as their use of grammatical and historical analysis. All the men under consideration possessed an uncommon interest in and capacity for languages. This, of course, was a major emphasis of the "New Learning." They were all skilled in Latin. Latimer alone was unable to use Greek,¹ while Bradford, Cranmer, Hooper and Ridley² excelled in the language. Only Bradford and Hooper demonstrate a working knowledge of Hebrew, although there is evidence that Cranmer had some basic lexical skills.³

In their written works and sermons, Bradford and Hooper stand out from the rest of the early Anglicans in their use of the biblical languages. Their backgrounds and preparation for the ministry were not at all similar. Hooper, who earned a B.A. at Oxford in 1519, most likely found his way into a Cistercian Monastery at Gloucester and received holy orders.⁴

¹Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 263.

²A certain Dr. Turner, having been instructed in Greek by Ridley wrote, "...though I might myself be an abundant witness ...yet beyond my testimony almost all Cambridge men can bear witness to it [Ridley's expertise in Greek]. Ridley, P.S., p. 492.

³Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 243, 293, 331; Bradford, P.S., vol. 1, p. 92. G.W. Bromiley suggests that Cranmer studied Hebrew while at Cambridge, yet it was never used in his written works. See Thomas Cranmer Theologian (London: Lutterworth Press, 1964), p. 12. G.E. Duffield notes that Cranmer's use of Hebrew lexical tools is evidenced by his notations made in various works, The Works of Thomas Cranmer (Berkshire: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1964), p. 355. *Berkshire Appleford*

⁴D.N.B., vol. 27, p. 304.

With the dissolution of monastic houses, he returned to London and came into contact with the writings of Zwingli and Bullinger which soon led to his conversion.¹ Returning to Oxford, Hooper began to preach the theology of the Swiss Reformation. It became increasingly clear to the young reformer that his life was endangered by the open proclamation of his views. Hooper made his way to Zurich and sat under the teaching of Bullinger for two years.

Bradford, born and educated in Manchester, was completely unschooled in divinity until he entered the Inner Temple as a student of common law in 1547 at thirty-seven years of age. It was as a law student that he first began to read theology. In August of 1548 he entered St. Catherine's Hall Cambridge, and due to his rich educational background Bradford was awarded an M.A. just one year later. Ridley invited the bright young thinker to become a fellow of Pembroke Hall, and soon his intellectual gifts and discipline resulted in an appointment as "Bible Clerk," and "Scholar of the House."

Hooper returned to England in May of 1549 and soon became chaplain to Protector Somerset. His erudition and popularity as a preacher led to an invitation to deliver a series of sermons on Jonah before the young Edward. His rise in the ranks of Anglican ecclesiastics was hindered to some degree by a protracted debate with Cranmer and Ridley over the issue of clerical vestments, but he was awarded the bishopric of Gloucester in 1552.

Both men were to serve the Church in England for but a

¹Original Letters, P.S., vol. 1, p. 33.

short time. In Bradford's case there were only five years between his ordination and his death as a heretic in the flames at Smithfield. In that time he had become the friend and confidant of Martin Bucer, the exile from Strasbourg, who had become Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. After an appointment as a prebend, Bradford was made chaplain to Edward VI in 1551. In the time prior to the King's death Bradford devoted himself to writing. Included in his extant works are five treatises, published private prayers, meditations, and letters. His most purely exegetical work, The Restoration of All Things, written shortly before he died, is for the most part a translation of a portion of Bucer's commentary on Romans.¹

Perhaps the most active exegete of the early Anglicans, Hooper's writings include a sermonic commentary on Jonah, an exposition of several Psalms, and annotations on the thirteenth chapter of Romans, as well as numerous treatises, declarations and confessions. His writings show great care, precision, and insight. He was burnt in his town of Gloucester in February of 1555, on the specific charge of holding heretical views on the eucharist.

Grammatical analysis

The most basic tool of grammatical analysis is the lexicon. Turning to a Greek dictionary by Budaeus, Hooper found help in interpreting I Corinthians 11:23, "That which I received from the Lord I also delivered unto you. . . ." He explained:

¹Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 351 f.

The verb paralambanē that Paul useth, signifieth, as Bædaeus saith, in commentariislinguae Graecae, Per manus traditum accipio, ut successor facit qui provinciam accipit. Significat et, A majoribus accipio et quasi per manus traditum accipio; et, A majoribus audiendo accipere. Paul could never have delivered this supper of Christ unto the Church, except he had first received it.¹

Thus, concluded Hooper, the order and simplicity of the Lord's Supper was totally from God without any accretions of human tradition.

Bradford, in discussing public penance, took care to clarify the term ἀπολογία which had been translated "satisfaction" by the by the "old interpreters" as they interpreted II Corinthians 7:11, ("For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you? What vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in this matter."). Translating ἀπολογία as "satisfaction" was well off the mark urged Bradford, as the term "...rather signifieth a 'defence' or answering again'...."²

In his Defence of Election,³ Bradford used Ephesians chapter one as the basis for his argument, after translating the passage "according to the very text of the Greek." This was amplified by numerous parenthetical clarifications designed to accurately convey the proper nuance of the terms in question.

Hooper often cited important Hebrew words and translated them in his writings. Occasionally he supplied lexical defini-

¹Hooper, P.S. vol. 1, pp. 237-238.

²Bradford, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 50-51.

³Ibid., pp. 312f.

tions, especially when the Latin or English failed to convey accurately the meaning of the text. Such was the case with Exodus 20:12, "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother.":

The text saith, that I should honour them. The which word in Hebrew hath a greater strenght than one in Latin or English can express. Cabad [אָבָד] signifieth to set much by, to have in estimation, to prefer and extol, and requireth these affections in the heart, and not only external reverence, as be fair words, outward gestures, without the love of the heart....¹

Besides an accurate definition of words, the terms of the text had to be studied in their local contexts and in relation to the total corpus of revelation. In discussing the true nature of faith as it developed through the Old and New Testaments, Hooper obviously put his concordance to work in developing his theme:

Faith is not a light opinion grounded upon man, but a firm persuasion and concrete assurance stablished in the scripture, Heb. xi. It signifieth not only knowledge, but also firm confidence in the thing known: as the Hebrew phrase useth many times the word "believe" for "trust." Asre col hose bo [אָסְרֵ כָל הוֹסֵ בּוֹ] Psalm ii. "Blessed are all that trust in him." Paul citeth a place out of Esay, 28th chap. Hammaemin lo iahish [חַמָּאֵמִין לֹא יֵאָחֵשׁ] (He that believeth shall not make haste)....The examples of the New Testament likewise declareth that faith signifieth confidence in the promise of God. ...Thus doth emeneh in the Hebrew, and pistis in the Greek signify. Therefore Laurentius Valla and Budaeus...call pistis, persuasionem as Quintilian doth.²

Bradford in similar fashion developed the meaning of "repentance":

Repentance or penance is no English word, but we borrow it of the Latinists, to whom penance is a forthinking in English; in Greek

¹Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 355-356. For further examples see: pp. 243, 293, 331, 317, 241.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 221. Hooper is drawing upon Budaeus' Commentarii Linguae Graecae which led him to the citations of Valla and Quintilian. See the edition of Basel, 1556, col. 152.

a being wise afterwards; in Hebrew a conversion or turning....Penance is a sorrowing or forthinking of our past sins, an earnest purpose to amend, or a turning to God, with trust of pardon.¹

At his Oxford disputation, bishop Ridley caught the weakness in his antagonist's argument regarding the term μεταστοιχειούται which was translated trans-elementatur in Latin. Ridley urged that to argue for transubstantiation from this one word was to "strain it overmuch." "For the same author hath in another place, ἡμεῖς μεταστοιχειούμεθα, that is, 'We are trans-elemented, or transformed and changed, into the body of Christ': and so by that word, in such a meaning as you speak of, I could prove as well that we are transformed indeed into the very body of Christ."²

The reformers were aware of the special care needed in dealing with synonymous terms and the difficulties which arise due to multiple meanings. This is especially an emphasis in Hooper's work. He pointed out that Paul used three terms to describe man's corrupt nature: ἀπερίθειαν, ἁμαρτίαν, and ἀσθενειαν.

The first word signifieth an impersuasibility, diffidence, incredulity, contumacy, or inobedience. The second signifieth error, sin, or deceit. The third betokeneth weakness, imbecility or imperfection.³

Therefore as Paul writes in I Corinthians 15, man's body is to be first born in imperfection, and that God accounts all men guilty of iniquity (Romans 11). In Galatians 3, Paul states

¹Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 45.

²Ridley, P.S., p. 230.

³Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 261-62.

that Scripture concludes that all men are under sin.¹ Yet, continued Hooper, Christians are not damned because Christ "satisfied them in his own body." When Paul wrote in Romans 5 that Christ died for sinners, he called those sinners "the enemies of God." "Howbeit he calleth not them theostygas in the scripture, that is to say contemners of God."² We see here that Hooper is using a rather sophisticated argument based upon a word available to, but not selected by the Apostle.

Hooper cautioned the would-be interpreter to take care with terms of multiple meaning. The term "made" he explained was used in different ways in the Bible. ". . . It signifieth a change of one nature into another as John ii, 'The water was made [γεγενημένον] wine.' . . . In many other places [it] signifieth as much as to say, received; as Paul writeth, Gal iii, 'Christ is made [γεγόμενος] for us the curse.' "Good Christian reader," he concluded, "remember to take the meaning of the scripture according to the circumstance thereof. . . ."³

The question naturally arises, Which tools did the English reformers use in doing grammatical analysis? Unfortunately, only Archbishop Cranmer's library ^{has been} ~~was~~ catalogued.⁴ It would

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴The catalogue was compiled by the Rev. Edward Burbidge, and appears in Bernard Quaritch's Contributions toward a Dictionary of English Book-Collectors, Part I (London: Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., 1892); it has been reprinted in G.E. Duffield's The Works of Thomas Cranmer (Berkshire: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1964), pp. 341-365.

certainly not have been typical of the literary holdings of an Anglican bishop of the sixteenth century--Cranmer had resources and connections which allowed him to collect far and wide. There is evidence that Latimer at least, was accustomed to using the Archbishop's library¹ and perhaps other colleagues did as well. Among the lexical aids were the Dictionary Graeco-Latinum, et Latino-Graecum, by Curio; Oecolampadius' Graecae Literaturae dragmata; De Philologia libri ii, by Budaeus, as well as Peter Berchorius' Dictionary in Sacras Scripturas. Cranmer's grammars included works by ¹ Pagninus (Institutionum Hebraica) and Sebastian Münster (Grammatica Hebraica). Perhaps the most useful tool for exegesis that the Archbishop had at his disposal was the magnificent Concordantiae Majores, which was both a concordance and a table of declinable and indeclinable words. There were of course, critical texts of the Old and New Testaments such as the monumental Complutensian Polyglott of Ximenes de Cisneros and presumably Erasmus' Novum Testamentum.² Certainly such a library was a rich mine for a Tudor biblical expositor.

The historical context

Although receiving not nearly as much attention among the English reformers as grammatical analysis, the historical context of a text was afforded some significance in exegesis.

¹Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 209.

²After Cranmer's execution, his library was seized by the Crown. A note was made in the cataloging which indicated that some books were stolen. Duffield has indicated that Erasmus' New Testament of 1516 as well as many other useful tools are among those missing. The Work of Thomas Cranmer, p. 355.

Latimer stated the general principle in interpreting Christ's words, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,":

For the understanding of this text, it shall be very needful to consider the circumstance going before; which thing duly considered giveth a great light to all places of the scripture. Who spake these words; to whom were they spoken; upon what occasion; and afore whom?¹

Hooper often prefaced his comments on a text by setting the historical scene. In the first of his series of sermons on Jonah we find the following suggestion:

It is not the least help that the reader or teacher of any prophet or other part of the scripture shall have, to know of what place, under what king, in which state of the commonwealth, the prophet lived that he purposeth to interpretate.²

Applying this principle to the passage before him, Hooper explained that Jonah lived in Samaria, "under an idolatrical king, Jeroboam, the son of Joas, a destable idolater..." in the same time as Amos and Joel.

The state and condition of the commonwealth was troublous and very unquiet; for because the Israelites by their idolatry in following the learning invented by man, and leaving the word of God, God punished them with many great and cruel wars; yet after his accustomed pity and compassion...he sent them...his holy prophets, that should call them from their idolatry and corrupt living.³

In his grace God sent Jonah to Ninevah, the capitol of Assyria the chief enemy of Israel during this time.

In his exposition of the second commandment, "Thou shalt make no graven image. . .", Hooper provided some historical

¹Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 282-283; see also p. 256.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 446.

³Ibid.

background to the problem of idolatry:

Herodotus Lib. II. saith, that 'the Egyptians were the first that made images to represent their gods.' And as the gentiles fashioned their gods with what figures they listed, so doth the Christians. To declare God to be strong, they made him the form of a lion; to be vigilant and diligent, the form of a dog; and as Herodotus saith, Lib. II. Mendesii formed their god Pana with a goat's face and goat's legs, and thought they did their god great honour, because among them the herdsmen of goats were held in most estimation.¹

The preacher was to call upon Herodotus again, as well as the historians Titus Livius, and Valerius, in demonstrating the miraculous events God sent to call men to repentance.²

Latimer, ever anxious to communicate the Scriptures accurately to the man in the pew, took pains to explain the monetary values involved in the "parabole of the workers," (Matthew 20: 1-16). Reading that those who had worked the whole day were hired for a "penny," he digressed. "That is, of our money ten pence; for like as we have a piece of money that we call a shilling, and it is in value twelve pence, so the Jews had a piece that they called denarium, and that was in value ten of our pence."³

In another sermon, Latimer was explaining the history of the Herodians, and provided the psychological context for Matthew 22:15-16. He noted that Herod:

...was an Idumean, and was appointed by the Romans to govern the Jews, and to gather the tribute money. Therefore he was hated among the Jews, and so were those who

¹Ibid., p. 320.

²Ibid., p. 417.

³Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 199; see also p. 295.

favoured the Roman's part, and in disdain they were called the Herodians.¹

When we compare the English reformers to the best of the continental exegetes, i.e., Luther, Bucer, Calvin, in the area of grammatico-historical analysis, we find the former group wanting. There is little doubt that the Anglicans possessed the necessary skills to perform exegesis of a high quality, yet their works were generally unscholarly when it came to biblical exposition. The reasons behind this paradox are two in number. First, as we have noted above, the productive careers of the early Anglicans were relatively short. Most of them did not begin to write for publication until the Edwardian era, which ended all too soon. During this time they were not afforded the luxury of quiet study in the libraries of Oxford or Cambridge, but were busy dealing with a thousand details of an administrative nature, as well as the practical problems of turning the Reformation into a reality in England. Secondly, and this is closely linked with the first, the major focus of their writings were either sermonic, polemical, or devotional. In view of the historical milieu in which they worked their priorities had to be pragmatic in nature. The more theoretical tasks of biblical exegesis were left to their brethren across the channel.

¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 289.

IV. Apocalyptic Exegesis

An atmosphere of expectancy

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century generated a new emphasis on apocalyptic exegesis which was the natural corollary of an interest in eschatological matters in general. This new attention to the prophetic text, especially evident in England, was the result of the convergence of several factors.

Times of crisis in the Church have repeatedly served to heighten eschatological speculation on the part of preachers and writers. The first fifty years of the sixteenth century was just such a period. Change, as we have noted above, was in the air. The future was uncertain. Without a doubt the ominous presence of the Turk at the doors of northern Europe was a significant factor which helped to turn the thoughts of Protestant exegetes to the apocalyptic symbols of Daniel, II Thessalonians, and Revelation.¹

A second ingredient which served to excite the prophetic palate was the fad of forming conjectures regarding the age of the world and the nearness of the End. A six-thousand year

¹George Joye, in his commentary on Daniel, saw the Turk as the divine rod which God would use to punish those nations which resisted the truth of the Reformation. As the Jews were punished by being removed from their land, "...even so shall all the crysten realms at laste for trusting away the gospell offered them and slaying the true pechers [sic] sent themof [sic] God be lykewyse miserably destroyed and captiued [sic] of the turke." The exposition of Daniel the Prophete gathered oute of Philipp Melanchthon/Johan Ecolampadius/Chonrade Pellicane & oute of John Draconite (Geneue [Antwerp]: 1545), p. 12.

chronology of world history began to reassert itself in the commentaries and sermons of the reformers. Based partially on the Talmudic "Tanna debe Eleyyahu," the six millennia of history were divided into three blocks of time, each numbering two thousand years.¹ This concept may have come to the attention of the reformers through Reuchlin's translation of the Babylonian Talmud which was published in Vienna between 1520 and 1523.

In 1532 John Carion, Philipp Melanchthon, and others collaborated in the production of an eschatological almanac entitled Carion's Chronicle. This work popularized the Talmudic scheme. In 1545 Andreas Osiander produced a similar work entitled Vermutung von den letzten zeiten/ und dem ende der welt/ aus der heiligen schrift gezogen.² In the same year George Joye published a commentary on the book of Daniel.³ In both of these works the Talmudic "House" or "School of Elijah" is cited as the source for the chronological model. Joye wrote:

...The house of Elijah thus saith: Six thousand yeris shall the world stonde [sic]/ and aftir [sic] that it shall fall and be destroid.

Two thousand yeris it shall stond under the lawe unwritten/ called the lawe of nature....

Two thousand yeris under the lawe written by Moses.

Two thousande under cryste and his gospell/albeit this last thousand yeris be not fulfilled/ for that the sinnes [sic] and wickedness of this worlde being so abominable

¹This chronological scheme was popular in patristic times. The Fathers in some cases related the six millennia to the six days of creation. See The Epistle of Barnabas, 31; and Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 5:28, 3.

²A. Osiander, Vermutung von den letzten zeiten... (Nurnberg: 1545), not paginated.

³G. Joye, The exposition of Daniel the Prophete gathered oute of Philip Melanchthon/Johan Ecolampadius/Chonrade Pellicane & oute of Johan Draconite (Geneue [Antwerp]: 1545).

...God must for his promise sake (Mat. 24) and for his chosen's sake shorten the days lest all flesshe perish.¹

It is evident that this view of world history was commonly accepted among the Anglican divines. When Latimer preached that men should not live for this world, he argued,

For we know by the scripture, and all learned men affirm the same, that the world was made to endure six thousand years. Now of these be passed already five thousand five hundred and fifty-two, and yet this time which is left shall be shortened for the elect's sake, as Christ himself witnesseth....The end of it no doubt is at hand.²

Such a chronology, as Latimer hinted, gave only an approximation of the time of the End. "It may come in my day's, as old as I am," he wrote, "or in our children's days."³

Thirdly, Anglican reformers, as countless others before them, became convinced that the prophetic words of Christ's Olivet Discourse were being fulfilled in their days. These "signs of the times" became a further confirmation that the Judgment Day was near at hand. Latimer, commenting upon the words, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. . . ." (Luke 22:25), preached:

Sometimes men have seen a ring about the sun; sometimes there hath been three suns at once... which no doubt signifies that this fearful day is not far off, in which Christ will come with his heavenly host....⁴

A more common interpretation of the celestial phenomena

¹Ibid., p. 9.

²H. Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 20, italics mine; see also vol. 1, pp. 172, 364.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 51. Such celestial phenomena were collected by Shetoo a Geveran, in a work entitled, Of the Ende of This World, trans. Thomas Rogers (London: Andrew Maunsel, 1577).

was advanced by Hooper regarding the "darkening of the sun," "the moon turning to blood," and the "stars falling to earth," (Matthew 24:29). Such signs were not to be taken literally, but were rather symbols, he contended. The

massing priests, friars, monks, and nuns,...have darkened with mists, and do daily darken (as ye hear by their sermons) the clear sun of God's most pure word. The moon which be God's true preachers which fetch only light of the sun of God's word, are turned into blood, prisons, and chains.¹

The "stars which fall" were ". . . the christian people [who] fall from heaven, that is to wit, from God's most true word to hypocrisy, most devilish superstition and idolatry."²

Another sign given by Christ of the approaching Day of the Lord was that "men's hearts would fail them for fear." This was being fulfilled, preached Latimer, not in the evil men of his age, because ". . . worldlings care not for that day. Therefore they shall be godly men which are so used, to be tokens unto the world."³ As an example of such a token, Latimer noted that Thomas Bilney before his death was ". . . in such an anguish and agony, so that nothing did him good, neither eating nor drinking, nor any other communication of God's word. . . ."⁴ The same he added was true at times of Martin Luther.⁵

One of the most important dividends to be earned by investing

¹Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 591.

²Ibid.

³Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 51.

⁴Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 591.

⁵Ibid.

time in apocalyptic exegesis was a cogent explanation of the historical tumult through which the Church was passing. The reformers looked to the prophetic text and came away convinced that the persecution and scorn they received from the Roman Church as well as some civil authorities was to be expected in the last desperate struggle against evil. The loss of privilege, exile, even death could be viewed as glorious sacrifices the humble Christian was called upon to make in the cause of triumphant righteousness. It is highly significant that the major apocalyptic works written by Englishmen prior to 1558 were composed while their authors were in exile.¹

A major part of this apocalyptic insight into persecution centered around the positive identification of the Roman papacy as the Antichrist. Long a major theme of Lollard doctrine, the persecuting Antichrist was reiterated by English and continental reformers both as an explanation of current events and a polemical weapon of formidable power. In the words of Revelation they found the two sides, God's elect, and the antichristian enemy headquartered at Rome, clearly delineated.

The sources of this "Antichrist tradition" were, at least in a direct sense, continental. As noted above, Frith, Joye and Bale, all developed their apocalyptic writings while in exile across the channel. In the case of Frith's The Revelation of Antichrist, it was mainly a translation of Luther's exposition

¹John Frith, The Revelation of Antichrist (Antwerp[?]: 1529); G. Joye The exposition of Daniel... (Antwerp: 1545); Joye's translation of Osiander's The conjectures of the ende of the worlde (London: 1548), and J. Bale, The Image of bothe Churches (Antwerp: 1545-1548).

of the eighth chapter of Daniel.¹ Frith merely added an introduction and a series of contrasts between the true Christ and the papal imposter. Luther probably also influenced Tyndale on the issue of the Antichrist, although the Englishman did show some independence on the issue.²

A second major continental influence on the interpretation of Antichrist among English reformers was Bullinger's commentary on II Thessalonians, an English translation of which came off a Cambridge press in 1538. Bullinger followed Luther's lead in this area with some modifications. Like Luther he dismissed the medieval ideal of an individual Antichrist, who those of "foolish opinion" suggest, ". . . will be only one man, born in

¹Frith, The Revelation of Antichrist (Hans Luft [?]: 1529); Luther, De Antichristo, W.A., band 7, pp. 705-778. Frith translates the text between pp. 722 and 772. For Luther's understanding of Antichrist, see P. Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. R. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), pp. 419-22.

²In his work of May 1527, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, Tyndale expounded a rather general view of the antichrist, viewing it as "...a spiritual thing" and is as much as to say, against Christ; that is, one that preacheth false doctrine, contrary to Christ. Antichrist was in the Old Testament, and fought with the prophets; he was also in the time of Christ and the apostles. ...Antichrist is now, and shall (I doubt not) endure till the world's end." P.S., vol. 1, p. 42. One year later in his Obedience of a Christian Man, Tyndale became more specific in his identification. His words at this point sound very much like Luther: They [the prelates] "...have driven peace out of all lands, and withdrawn themselves from all obedience to princes...; and have set up that great idol, the whore of Babylon, antichrist of Rome, whom they call pope...." P.S. vol. 1, p. 191. See also P.S. vol. 1, pp. 215, 240-241; vol. 2, pp. 179, 181-2, 196-7; and vol. 3, pp. 102-07, and 171.

³H. Bullinger, A commentary upon the seconde Epistle of S. Paul to the Thessalonians..., trans R.H. [?] (Cambridge: 1538).

Babylon, of the tribe of Dan, and reign certain years."¹ On the nature of the Antichrist however, Bullinger held a broader position than did his German counterpart. Luther, for the most part, limited the scope of Antichrist to the Roman papacy. It was Rome which advocated justification by works in place of the gospel of grace. This fact, according to Daniel 11, and II Thessalonians 2, was the prime indicator of Antichrist, he felt.² Bullinger saw Mohammed clearly depicted in the words of II Thessalonians 2:3-4:

'Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.' We have herde suche examples of hys cruelness," he wrote, "that we maye very well understande by thys chylde of perdition and sinful man, the kyngdome of Machomet [sic]."³

In Luther's eyes, neither the Turks nor the Tartars raised themselves up and set themselves against Christ. This characteristic of the Antichrist he felt, was the Roman Pope's alone in that he would not permit salvation from damnation except by his power.⁴

I do not think Mohammed is the antichrist. He does things too obviously; that black devil is so easily recognized that neither faith nor reason can be deceived.... But the pope of our time is the true antichrist

¹Ibid., fol. 16.

²Luther, Luthers Werke, WA. band 39, part 2, p. 381; see also band 51, p. 509.

³H. Bullinger, A commentary upon the seconde Epistle of S. Paul to the Thessalonians ..., trans. R.H. [?] (Cambridge: 1538), fols. 31, and 37.

⁴Luther, WA., Band 53, p. 217.

He has a very crafty, beautiful, and glorious devil who sits inside the church.¹

In wrestling with the interpretation of Daniel's "little horn" (Daniel 7:8, 19,28), Joye followed Bullinger's broader view of the Antichrist:

...Ye see that by this litle horne and by the horned beste sene of Joan [John] be understood [sic] the anticristen adversaries of cryste and his chirche whether thei be the seclare kings and empowers popes [sic] or bisshops/ turke or Mohmmette or these all together conivered [sic] agens the lorde and his anointed....²

For Bullinger and Joye especially, Antichrist could be recognized by corruption, the misuse of power, and the persecution of God's true church. Both men trace the development of the "little horn" from about the time of Gregory I when "...certayne men cocluded upon this...[Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church....] that the seate of Rome was the chief of all churches, and that the Byshope of Rome was the head ruler over all byshopes."³ As Joye wrote:

This lytell horne was and is the Anticrysten kingdome of the popes of Rome with all their unclean clergie lytle by lytle...creping up from so low a state into so hyghe dignities, powers and possessions....⁴

Bullinger ended his polemic against Rome with evidence from his own day. "We have sene also Byshopes of Rome in our tyme, that

¹Ibid., p. 394, trans. R. Schultz; see P. Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, p. 421.

²Joye, The exposcian of Daniel the Prophete, p. 105.

³Bullinger, A commentary upon the seconde Epistle of S. Paul to the Thessalonaians..., trans. R.H. [?] (Cambridge: 1538), fol. 18.

⁴Joye, The exposcian of Daniel the Prophete, p. 99.

nothyng more unshamesaste [sic], more filthy, more abhominable [sic] or wicked things can be ymagyned than they have done."¹

The theme of a persecuting Antichrist, not only specific man, but the institution of the papacy, popularized by Luther and Bullinger,² and transmitted to England via the works of Frith, Joye, Tyndale, and Bale, became common among the Anglican reformers. As early as February 1536, Archbishop Cranmer was preaching that every mention of Antichrist in the Bible was a reference to the Pope of Rome.³ In a later work on the same topic he wrote:

Of the tyranny and cruelty of antichrist in persecuting of Christ's true church, prophesied Daniel long before. Speaking of the empire and regiment of Rome: 'The fourth beast,' saith he, 'shall be greater than all other kingdoms; it shall devour, tread down, and destroy all other lands; he shall speak words against the highest of all....And again he saith of Antiochus, which was a figure of antichrist: 'There shall arise a king unshamed of face; he shall be wise in dark speaking....'⁴

¹Bullinger, II Thessalonians, fol. 31.

²Ibid., fol. 32.

³On 10 February, 1536, the following information regarding Cranmer's most recent sermon was recorded in a letter from Chapuys to Granville: "This notable and good catholic archbishop of Canterbury in his preaching on Sunday last...proposed to prove that all the passages in Scripture about Antichrist referred to his Holiness, and, to injure at a blow the Holy See and the Imperial authority, cited one author who said that Antichrist should come when the empire was ruined. This, he said, it was now [sic], because of all the monarchy only a small portion of Germany obeyed the empire...ending by saying that the Pope was the true Antichrist, and no other need be looked for." Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1888), vol. 10, #283, p. 104.

⁴Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 62.

Ridley too saw Daniel's words coming true in his days:

I think that the abomination that Daniel prophesied of so long before, is now set up in the holy place. For all antichrist's doctrine, laws, rites, and religion... I understand to be the abomination.¹

The bishop noted that the kinds of persecutions predicted by Daniel i.e. sword, fire, imprisonment; were coming to fruition in Marian England. He therefore urged true believers to take Christ's words seriously and "fly to the mountains," ". . . which signifieth places of safeguard, and all such things which are able to defend from the plague."²

Turning to John's Revelation Cranmer saw in the opening of the fourth and fifth seals the success of Antichrist in slaying God's saints:

He [John] lively setteth forth the pope in his own colours, under the person of the whore of Babylon being drunken with the blood of the saints; pointing, as it were with his finger, who this whore of Babylon is, and the place where she shall reign, saying" 'The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.'³

What other city could the apostle have meant, he asked, but Rome? "Wherefore it followeth Rome to be the seat of antichrist, and the pope to be very antichrist himself."⁴ For Cranmer, Ridley,

¹Ridley, P.S., p. 63.

²Ibid. It is interesting to note that Cranmer followed Chrysostom in seeing this "flight to the mountains" as an escape from heresy (the abomination of desolation) to the Scriptures. Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 24.

³Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 62.

⁴Ibid., pp. 62 f.

and Bradford, it became clear that the ceremony of the mass, transubstantiation, and purgatory, were in like manner, the doctrines of Antichrist.¹

Thus, by means of conjectures regarding the age of the world, the prophetic realisation of Christ's words in the Olivet Discourse in their time, and the certainty with which they identified the pope as Antichrist, the Anglican reformers were convinced that they were indeed engaged in the last great desperate struggle between the forces of light and darkness which preceded the victorious return of Christ.

It is only natural that in such an atmosphere of expectancy, the early Protestant exegetes would begin to reexamine the book of Revelation. As they worked to understand the Apocalypse in light of the ordeal through which the Church was then passing, a highly significant hermeneutical principle began to emerge which would not only explain the Reformation as a part of God's plan, but also lay the foundation for a Protestant theory of history. It has been designated the "historicist" approach to Revelation.² In basic terms it seeks to interpret the Apocalypse along historical lines, specifically the history of the Church. Revelation

¹Ridley, P.S., pp. 52-53, 418; Bradford, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 390, 441, 443, 445; vol. 2, pp. 56, 142, 202; Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1 pp. 12, 18, 19, 46, 353, 371, 376; vol. 2, pp. 10, 15, 39, and 167.

²Historicist exegetical method is not to be confused with "historicism," the view of historiography which developed in Germany in the 1880's in reaction to the Enlightenment. "Historicism" stresses the axiom that nothing in human history can be fully understood in isolation from its past. In comprehending the past, the customs and beliefs of other cultures in a different time, the historian must rely not so much upon his rational as his intuitive faculties.

becomes, to the historicist exegete, a guidebook to history, which gives the Christian orientation and insight as to the past, present, and future.

By mid-century this approach to the Apocalypse was virtually universal among the reformers, its popularity however did not develop widely until about 1530. The first two decades of the century were marked by a coolness toward the book of Revelation among the leading reformers, if not an outright denigration of its value. Erasmus doubted the canonicity of the book, excluding it from his Paraphrases and questioning its value for spiritual edification. This negative note was echoed by Zwingli and by Luther, who questioned the apostolic authorship of Revelation and thus its right to a place in the canon of Scripture. Luther's introduction to the Apocalypse in 1522 displayed his doubts:

I miss more than one thing in this book, and it makes me consider it to be neither apostolic nor prophetic.

First and foremost, the apostles do not deal with visions, but prophecy in clear and plain words, as do Peter and Paul, and Christ in the gospel. For it befits the apostolic office to speak clearly of Christ and his deeds, without images and visions....

My spirit cannot accommodate itself to this book. For me this is reason enough not to think highly of it: Christ is neither taught nor known in it.¹

Tyndale, undoubtedly influenced by Luther on this point wrote no prologue to Revelation. It was a genre of literature which did not suit his emphasis on the "literal-historical" sense. He wrote: "The apocalypse, or revelations of John, are allegories whose literal sense is hard to find in many places."²

¹Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 35, p. 398 f.

²Tyndale, P.S., vol. 1, p. 305.

The development of historicist exegesis

In 1530 Luther revised his introduction to Revelation. At some time during the interval of eight years between the two works his opinion of the book had been radically revised. The second introduction clearly reflected this new direction:

Since it is intended as a revelation of things that are to happen in the future, and especially of tribulations and disasters that were to come upon Christendom, we consider that the first and surest step toward finding its interpretation is to take from history the events and disasters that have come upon Christendom till now, and hold them alongside of these images, and so compare them very carefully. If then, the two perfectly coincided and squared with one another, we could build on that as a sure, or at least an unobjectionable interpretation.¹

The hermeneutical method which Luther outlined above is historicist in approach. As noted earlier, the historicist exegete views the text of Revelation as a prophetic blueprint for the course of history, specifically the history of the Church from the apostolic period until the initiation of the eternal state.

It is true that this model for interpreting Revelation was not new. Before attempting to trace the broad outlines of the development of historicist exegesis, it may be helpful to define briefly the other common modes of interpretation, namely, the "idealist," the "futurist," and the "praeterist" views. The "idealist" basically adopts an allegorical approach to the Apocalypse. Reluctant to accept any symbols as pointing to actual historical events, the idealist interpreter draws from the apocalyptic imagery universal moral and religious

¹Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 35, p. 401.

principles which find application in any age. The "futurist" reads Revelation in a literal sense, and finds the greater part of the book as predictive of future events. The "praeterist" assumes that the author's own time furnished the basic material of Revelation, hence it is not predictive. As we shall see, the "idealist" and the "historicist" positions were dominant up through the sixteenth century.

The post-apostolic period of church history was characterized by a strong chil²ist eschatology. This type of exegesis is exemplified by Papias and Irenaeus, who found in the twentieth chapter of Revelation a literal future one-thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth. This thrust however, seems to have lost momentum with the cessation of persecution, and is rarely in evidence after the reign of Constantine.

The "idealist" approach to Revelation can be traced at least as far back as Tyconius, who lived in the late fourth century. His method was to spiritualize the book. The imagery he saw as depicting a struggle between God and Satan, between good and evil. Jerusalem was the Church, while Babylon represented the world. This dualism was adopted by Augustine, and incorporated in The City of God, thereby gaining tremendous influence. Like Tyconius, Augustine rejected chiliasm, viewing the "millennium" as the whole age of the Church, from Christ to the End. This basic approach to the interpretation of Revelation became the "mainstream" apocalyptic hermeneutic in the Medieval period, reflected in the English scholar Bede as well as others.¹

¹R. Bauckham, in his work Tudor Apocalypse, provides a detailed examination of the transmission of this method of interpretation, pp. 17f.

In the ninth century we begin to see a divergence from the mainstream flow of medieval apocalyptic exegesis. A little known monk named Berengaud, associated with the French abbey of Ferrieres (c. 859), produced a commentary of Revelation entitled Apocalypsis revelatio interpretatur. In this work Berengaud organized all of world history into seven ages. The seven seals of Revelation were the basis for his periodisation:

Seal

1. The righteous living prior to the Flood.
2. The righteous living from the Flood until the institution of the Law.
3. The doctors of the Law (The black horse), up until the time of the prophets.
4. The time of the Prophets.
5. The souls beneath the altar were representative of period of martyrdom in the early days of the Church.
6. The Church age (The elements in convulsion), beginning with the fall of Jerusalem.
7. The final state of heavenly blessedness.¹

We see here a use of the Apocalypse to organize human history. The periods are general for the most part.

In the twelfth century this historicist approach picked up momentum in the works of Anselm of Havelberg and Joachim of Fiore. Anselm (d. 1158), took the sevenfold scheme of Berengaud and restricted its application to the Church age. Once again he used the seven seals as prophetic indicators of the periods:

¹E.B. Elliott, Horae Apocalypticae (London: Seeley, Jackson and Halliday, 1862), vol. 4, pp. 371-78.

Seal

1. The earliest history of the Church --white with the shining of miraculous gifts.
2. The period of the martyrs (The red horse);
3. A general time following the reign of Constantine during which the Church was blackened by sin and corruption (The black horse);
4. A period of hypocrisy (The pale horse);
5. The souls beneath the altar were taken for the martyrs of the past two seals who continually pray for a hastening of the End;
6. The time of the antichrist when the Church will be filled with earthly-mindedness;
7. The final state, the saints at rest.¹

Once again, although the timespan of the periodisation is restricted to the Church age, the ages are quite general in nature.

Joachim of Fiore (1132-1202), certainly the most influential of all medieval apocalyptic commentators, is both similar to his predecessors and innovative. Like Berengaud and Anselm, Joachim, in his Expositio in Apocalypsim, used the seven seals of Revelation to build his system, but with a major change. According to his principle called "the concord of the testaments," Joachim saw the seals as both looking forward to the Church age, and back to the Old Testament dispensation as well:

Seal

1. Described the period from Abraham to Joshua, and from the birth of Christ until the death of John the Evangelist;

¹Ibid., pp. 383-84; see also R.W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, vol. 22, 1972, pp. 165 f.

2. Described the period from Joshua until David, and the death of John until the time of Constantine;
3. The time from David to Elisha, and from Constantine to Justinian;
4. Pictured the time from Elisha to Isaiah, and from Justinian until Charlemagne;
5. Described the time from Isaiah until the Babylonian captivity and from Charlemagne to the present time;
6. The time from the Jews return to Palestine until the death of Malachi, and the time just beginning in which the Roman Babylon (i.e. the Roman Empire) will be stuck down;
7. Described the period from Malachi until the ministry of Christ, and the end of the second state of the general history of the world.¹

These seven seals were included in the first two of three general eras, which he called the "Age of the Father" (The Old Testament), and the "Age of the Son" (The New Testament and Church Age). Out of these two, and, at the conclusion of the seventh seal, would flow a third "Age of the Spirit." This would be a time of renewed spirituality during which new and pure religious orders would be formed and the conversion of the world to Christianity would commence. This third "Age of the Spirit" would conclude with a brief resurgence of evil immediately before the final judgment.²

We see in these three authors the development of a historicist model of interpretation of Revelation. History is seen as moving toward a terminus, and this movement is clearly depicted in the chapters of the Apocalypse. Joachim goes beyond

¹Ibid., pp. 387-88.

²Ibid., p. 388.

his predecessors in becoming more specific regarding the beginning and ending of the various stages in history. Although all three expositors dealt with the subject of the Antichrist, he was seen as a rival to the Roman Pope, not as the Pope or the papal system in general.

By the fourth decade of the sixteenth century, with apocalyptic expectancy high, the time was ripe for someone to accept Luther's challenge regarding Revelation: ". . . to take from history the events and disasters that have come upon Christendom till now and hold them up alongside these images."¹ The man most ably suited for such a task in England was John Bale.²

Bale was born in the village of Cove, in Suffolk in 1495. At twelve years of age his parents encouraged the youth to join the Carmelite monastery at Norwich. He remained with the Order, as a friar, for twenty-five years. During this time he acquired a strong interest and background in patristic studies and became a determined defender of the "Old Faith." As a Cambridge undergraduate, the young friar was an ardent and vocal opponent of the "New Learning" and the Reformation. His conversion came about through an association with Lord Wentworth.

¹Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 35, p. 401.

²The current interest in the intricacies of Tudor apocalyptic thought has produced a number of analyses of Bale the expositor: Richard Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse (Oxford: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), pp. 80-90, 108-110, 122-126, 140-143; Katherine Firth, Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain (Oxford: The University Press, 1979), pp. 67-94, 103-107; 116-119; William Haller, Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" and the Elect Nation (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 61-64, 68-70; Paul Christianson, Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War (Toronto: University Press, 1978) pp. 8-9, 13-22, 37-38, 245-245.

It seems to have been a sudden and dramatic turning. He recorded in his autobiography the following confession:

I wandered in utter ignorance, and blindness of mind, both at Norwich and Cambridge...till the word of God shining forth, the churches of God began to return to the fountain of true divinity; ...being not called by any monk or priest, but seriously stirred up by the illustrious the Lord Wentworth [sic] ...I presently saw and acknowledged my own deformity, and immediately...I was removed from a barren mountain to the flowing and fertile valley of the Gospel....Hence I made haste to deface the mask of wicked antichrist, and entirely threw off his yoke from me, that I might be partaker of the lot and liberty of the sons of God.¹

Renouncing his vows, Bale took a wife and "made haste to deface the mask of wicked antichrist" by means of becoming a propagandist for the Reformation. Bale produced at least two satirical plays before 1538 designed to ridicule the abuses within the Roman Catholic Church.² These works, together with his open renunciation of monastic vows made Bale many enemies. It was fortunate for the young reformer that Thomas Cromwell, attracted by the polemical value of his plays, took Bale under his protection. This association proved to be highly significant to the development of Bale as an antiquarian scholar and bibliographer. As a Carmelite Bale became interested in the history of his Order and was well acquainted with the manuscript holdings of several monastic libraries. When Cromwell began to enact the "Dissolution

¹Bale, The Vocacyon of Joha Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie... (Rome [London: Hugh Singleton]: 1553), p. 14.

²Bale, A .brefe Comedy or enterlude concernynge the temptacyon of our lorde and sauer Jesus Christ, by Sathan in the desert..., 1538; and A brefe comedy or enterlude of Iohan Baptistes preachynge in the wyldernesse, openynge the craftye assaults of the hypocrytes, with the gloriouse baptyme of the Lorde Jesus Christ, 1538. Photocopies held by the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

of Monasteries" between 1536 and 1539, Bale, due to his association with the Lord Privy Seal, was able to procure a sizable manuscript collection. These literary resources laid the foundation for Bale's major contribution as a bibliographer, his Illustrium Majori^s Britanniae Scriptorum, hoc est, Angliae Cambriae ac Scotiae Summarium...¹ and also provided him with a rich mine of historical material upon which to draw in developing his historicist interpretation of the Apocalypse. We have indication, however, that Bale felt inclined to write a commentary during the happy days under Cromwell's patronage.

In 1540 Bale's fortunes began to change with the fall and subsequent execution of Cromwell. Aware of his vulnerability, Bale fled England for the safer life of an exile in Germany. It was seven years before Edward became King and Bale returned to his homeland. During this seven-year sojourn, the antiquarian became an expositor, as he was drawn to the words of another exile, John the Evangelist.

The Image of bothe Churches, as Bale entitled his commentary, was written in three parts. The first two installments were off the press in 1545.² The final section was published sometime prior to the death of Henry VIII, as all three parts were burned at St. Paul's Cross in 1546.³

¹Bale, Illustrium Majoris Britanniae scriptorum... (Gippeswici: Ioannem Ouerton, 1548).

²See L.P. Fairchild, "'The vocacyon of Johan Bale' and Early English Autobiography," Renaissance Quarterly, vol. 24, 1971, pp. 333-35.

³Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 5, pp. 565-568. The first complete edition was printed in London by Richard Jugge (see next page)

As a commentary it must rank as one of the most influential apocalyptic works of the sixteenth century. The first complete printed work of its kind in English, The Image, as we shall see, became a paradigm upon which later expositors were to build. In a real sense this major effort of John Bale was the beginning of an English apocalyptic tradition.

Bale's historicist approach

Bale's hermeneutic is built upon a dualist view of history in which every person is identified with one of two groups: 1) the elect of God, and 2) the beguiled followers of Satan. As discussed above, this philosophy is at least as old as Tyconius and Augustine. Bale, following a late medieval tradition designated the two groups "churches."¹ The evil alliance was the "Church of Satan," and the true believers, the "Church of God." The supreme value of the Apocalypse was in giving the individual orientation as to which camp he belonged. "He that knoweth not this book," he wrote, "knoweth not what the church is whereof he is not a member. For herein is the estate thereof from Christ's ascension to the end of the world under pleasant figures and

(Continued from previous page, Footnote #3): in 1548. The commentary was published four times before the end of the century attesting to its sustained popularity. See W.T. Davies, "A Bibliography of John Bale," Oxford Bibliographic Society Proceedings and Papers, vol. 5, 1940.

¹Wyclif does use the phrase "Church of malignants," as quoted in J. Lechler, John Wycliffe and his English Precursors, trans. P. Lorimer (London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1878), p. 293; Thomas Bilney, as recorded by Foxe, also made reference to "the malignant church," Acts and Monuments, vol. 4, pp. 630, 637.

elegant tropes decided. . . ."¹ It was this concept of two churches locked in continual battle down through the ages which became the integrating principle for Bale's interpretation of Revelation. The task of the interpreter was to search out the record of the two churches in the historical chronicles and then collate the facts with the apocalyptic symbolism of Scripture. This, as we have seen was not Bale's idea originally.² His contribution to the development of an English apocalyptic tradition was rooted in his expertise as an antiquarian. Only a man with the resources and temperament of an historian could successfully procede with a commentary on the Apocalypse following the historicist model. There was never a doubt in Bale's mind as to which of the two disciplines was the more important. The text of Scripture was for him ". . . a full clearance [complete explanation] to the history of the world since the ascension of Christ,"

...opening the true natures of...ages, times, and seasons. He that hath store of them [histories and chronicles], and shall diligently search them over, conferring the one with the other, time with time, and age with age, shall perceive most wonderful causes. For in the text are they only propounded in effect, and promised

¹Bale, The Image of bothe churches, P.S., p. 252.

²As we have noted above, Luther realized the tremendous value of history in understanding Revelation, yet he acknowledged his dependence upon others in making use of it: "Though I was not at first historically well informed, I attacked the papacy on the basis of Holy Scripture. Now I rejoice heartily to see that others have attacked it from the same source, that is, from history. I feel that I have triumphed in my point of view as I note how clearly history agrees with Scripture. What I have learned and taught from Paul and Daniel...that history proclaims...." quoted by N.S. Tjernagel, Henry VIII and the Lutherans (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 148.

to follow in their seasons....: but in the chronicles they are evidently seen by all ages fulfilled. Yet is the text a light to the chronicles, and not the chronicles to the text.¹

Specific historical correlation

It may be useful to contrast Luther's use of historical material with Bale's, demonstrating the intensity with which Bale applied his hermaneutic. Luther, in his brief introduction, worked out a rough pattern of periodisation upon which he pegged key historical events and personalities. Unlike the medieval historicists, Luther did not base his chronology on the seven seals, but treated them as universals. The first four seals he related to: 1) bodily tribulations, and war; 2) bloodshed (the red horse); 3) scarcity and famine (the black horse); 4) pestilence and plague (the pale horse). These four tribulations were to be continually present in church history until the End. They always followed times when men despised the Word of God.² It is not until the seventh chapter that Luther begins to relate the text to historical personages and specific events. Chapters seven and eight spoke of spiritual tribulations in which various heresies came upon the Church. Luther became quite specific in identifying heretics, who were represented in the text as evil angels. These men included Tatian, who forbade marriage to priests, Origen, ". . . who embittered and corrupted the Scriptures with philosophy

¹Ibid., p. 253.

²Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 35, p. 401-02.

³Ibid., p. 403.

and reason. . . ."; Marcion and Novatus.¹ The "good angels" were in like manner, the defenders of orthodoxy, including: Spiridion,² Athanasius, Hilary, and the corporate council of Nicea.

In the ninth and tenth chapters, where John related the "woes" which come upon a suffering world, Luther saw three persecutions, each becoming more intense. They were Arius, Mohammed, and finally the Roman papacy.

The next specific historical correlations Luther made came in his comments on the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters where the seven angels with the seven bowls represented the godly preachers of the Reformation era.³ The evil frogs who fought back were seen as Faber, Eck, and Emser.⁴

In the twentieth chapter Luther noted that Satan was to be released after a one-thousand year confinement to lead Gog and Magog, the Turks and the Tartars, in a final assault upon God's church.⁵

We note in the correlations that Luther's approach was to deal with generalities, the great movements in church history. His specific references are confined to the ancient Church and his own day--the two periods he knew the best.

¹Ibid., p. 403.

²Spyridon (d. 348), was the bishop of Tremithus in Cyprus who played an important role in the councils of Nicea and Sardica (c. 343).

³Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 35, p. 403.

⁴Ibid., p. 407.

⁵Ibid., p. 408.

Bale divided all of world history into seven periods or "ages," clearly reflecting the medieval historicists.¹ The seventh period lasts from the time of Christ until the End. This "Church Age" was in turn divided into seven parts.² John's Revelation described the activities of this last age.

Like Anselm and Joachim, Bale began his specific historical correlations with the seals of Revelation six. The seven seals and seven trumpets ran chronologically parallel, corresponding to the seven ages of the Church period. The first seal and trumpet represented the Apostolic period, when Christ was preached throughout the world.³ The second seal pointed toward the time immediately following that of the Apostles when God gave the Church great preachers to remove the "clouds of ignorance." "Of this number," wrote Bale,

was Ignatius, Polycarpus, Theophilus, Antiochenus, Justinus Martyr, Agrippa, Castorius, Aristides, Quadratus, Meliton, Apollinaris, Theodotion, Irenaeus, Apollonius, Melchiades, Rhodon, and divers others. These boldly confessed Christ, they taught his verity, they put aside the darkness, they ministered the light, they confounded the adversaries both with tongue and pen.⁴

These men did battle against the false teachers of the time, represented by the "red horse." The power given to the horseman of Revelation 6:4 was seen as the exercise of temporal authority usually against the Church. Specifically the men wielding such

¹Bale, P.S., p. 450.

²Ibid., p. 380.

³Ibid., pp. 312, and 343.

⁴Ibid., p. 314.

power were: Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Aurelius, Decius, Valerian, Diocletian¹ and Julian.¹

The third age was characterized by a defection from the truth of the Gospel, led by Arius, Macedonius, Eutyches, Sabellius, Nestorius, and Pelagius. Such were seen as the "black horse,"

...representing the aforesaid heretics and unpure ministers, ambitious prelates, and false teachers, full of errors, lies, pride, and uncleanness. Upon these and such other rideth Satan the world over, for he is their master, lord, king, and father.²

The voice in the midst of the "four living creatures" (Revelation 6:6), was that of the men who defended the faith during this age, including: Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Didymus, Gregory Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary, Jerome, and Augustine.³

In the fourth age, roughly the medieval period, the dominating historical factors according to Bale were the rise of Mohammed, and the development of the Roman papacy.⁴ This was the time when corruption penetrated to the very core of the Church.

Then they builded monasteries, advanced images, invented purgatory, not without many strange revelations. Then came in this ceremony and that, as censuring of images, procession and holy water, with candles, ashes, and palms. Then were shaven crowns commanded, holy ornaments devised, marriage and meats inhibited, and hallowing of churches practised. At last crept in

¹Ibid., p. 315.

²Ibid., pp. 317 & 318.

³Ibid., p. 318.

⁴Ibid., pp. 319, 347.

the worshipping of relics and shrines...with litanies, masses and dirges for the dead.... No gospel might then be taught, but to obtain this ware for advantage. Universities were then builded, and general studies founded the world over, with all kinds of crafty learning, to uphold this new christian religion, or priestish superstition. The antichrists thus spread, and their kingdom well set forward, the light was clearly extincted, and darkness overwent the whole world.¹

The fifth "seal" and "trumpet" represented the time just prior to, and including the Scholastic period. Here Bale clearly understood that "The souls of them slain for the word of God" (Revelation 6:9-11) was a reference to the persecution of the Waldenses and Albigenses by the Antichrist.² During this time a "star fell from heaven to earth" (Revelation 9:1), depicting the fall of the school men from the "doctrine of the Spirit." Teachers sought after Plato and Averroes, and felt Aristotle was necessary for the proper interpretation of Scripture. The "locusts" which flew out of the "pit," he reasoned, were "... swarms of cardinals, bishops, doctors, shaven priests, abbots, canons, friars, sisters, etc."³

Bale felt that he was living in the sixth age, a time when the true preachers of the Gospel were exposing the "errors and

¹Ibid., p.320 . Hooper quite possibly was influenced by Bale at this point. He described the fourth seal as, "...the time wherein hypocrits and dissemblers entered into the Church under the pretense of true religion, as monkers [sic], friars, nuns, massing priests...that have killed more souls with heresies and superstition than all the tyrants that ever killed bodies with fire, sword, or banishment...." Hooper, P.S., vol. 2, p. 591.

²Ibid., p. 322.

³Ibid., p. 352.

abominations" of the papal system.¹ The prophetic "earthquake" which initiated the sixth block of time (Revelation 6:12), was fulfilled in England when the consistory met to deny the doctrine of John Wyclif, and again on the continent when the Council of Constance degraded John Hus.² During this time, the Antichrist, who had always worked in opposition to God, became more openly active.³ This Antichrist had found expression in the papal system of Rome. It was true that Antichrist had suffered "a deadly wound" which Bale saw as the impact of the Reformation upon the Church.⁴ Specifically the "ten horns of the beast which hate the whore and make her desolate and naked" (Revelation 17:12), was a reference to the swing among temporal powers--England, Denmark, and Saxony--as well as key ecclesiastics--Cranmer, Latimer, Hermann of Wied, etc.--away from Romanism to the truth of the Reformation doctrine and practice.⁵ Those reformers most actively "making the whore desolate" included: Reuchlin, Luther, Erasmus, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Bucer, Capito, Melanchthon, Calvin, Lambert, and Bullinger.⁶

Despite this assault of the righteous, Bale noted that the Scriptures foretold that the "head" of the beast would recover

¹Ibid., pp. 359-60.

²Ibid., p. 326.

³Ibid., p. 426.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., pp. 508-09.

⁶Ibid., p. 509.

from the deadly wound" (Revelation 13:3). This healing was taken to be the resurgence of the Roman system following the initial blow of reform.

In many places where as the Gospel has been preached, the bishop of Rome deposed, sects, shrines, and sanctuaries destroyed, monasteries, priories and friaries turned over, remaineth still their poison....Still continueth their more than Jewish ceremonies, their prestibulous [deceitful] priesthood, their vowing to have no wives, and their sodomitical chastity. Still remaineth their foul masses,.... their prodigious sacrifices, their censuring of idols, their boyish processions....their confessions in the ear.... If this be no healing of antichrist's wounded head, never is like to be any.¹

As energetic as Bale was in ferreting out the historical correlations to apocalyptic imagery in the first six portions of the Church age, he became more reticent to speculate on the symbols representing the future in the seventh period. With the breaking of the seventh seal and the establishment of the New Zion, there is a definite shift in Bale's exposition. His commentary assumes an almost paraphrastic style, as he seems hesitant to reach definite conclusions. At one point he cautions the overly zealous reader of Revelation against too much curiosity ". . . in search of so high mysteries. . . ." "Rather submit your weak judgments with Paul, confessing God's secret councils to be unsearchable, and his ways past finding out."²

In this brief review of Bale's method we have merely highlighted his work by selecting some key examples. Bale was energetic in carrying out the hermeneutical project in minute detail.

¹Ibid., p. 427.

²Ibid., p. 588.

In this task he was able to develop a large number of correlations drawing upon his rich supply of historical manuscript records. Not only did Bale rework the historicist framework of his predecessors, using it as a tool of Protestant polemics, but painstakingly tracked down the historical personalities and events which would lend credibility to his efforts, at least with his Protestant readers.

Bale's "universalist" exegesis

Despite the fact that Bale devised a seven-fold periodization for the history of the Church, and sought to supply historical data for each chronological compartment, a great part of the imagery of the Apocalypse he interpreted as being universally applicable regardless of time or geography. Although his focus is often upon English history, from which the majority of his examples are drawn, Bale expected the same pattern of conflict described in the pages of Revelation to be acted out in other countries as well. As noted above, the "beast" represented the entire Roman system, but more than that, it depicted the "carnal kingdom of antichrist" which began with Cain and continued throughout history.¹ Thus the Antichrist was manifested as the Pope in Europe, Mohammed in Africa, and so forth in Asia and India.

The Church, not the Virgin, was seen in the imagery of "the woman who gave birth to a child" (Revelation 12:1-2). Such a Church, the elect of God, had always existed. Christ the "child" was "conceived" with the promise made to Adam and Eve of a

¹Ibid., p. 496.

deliverer, and born at the incarnation.¹

Bale's use of apocalyptic numerology is another evidence of his bent toward universalist exegesis. The number "four" he pronounced the "universal number." In the exposition of Revelation 4:6, the "four living creatures" did not represent four great prophets, or evangelists, but "...all faithful believers and earnest setters fourth of the verity in the four quarters of the whole world."² "Seven" likewise, Bale understood as the number of perfection or completion. In respect to Revelation 5:1 he noted, the seven golden candlesticks represent "...not only the said seven congregations in Asia, but also the universal Christianity of the whole world. For seven in Scripture most commonly signifieth all or the whole of that it comprehendeth."³ This use of "seven" as a universal is seen in the three and one-half days that the "two witnesses" would lie dead in the streets (Revelation 11:7-9). Bale explained that three and one-half was also seven halves, and thus the reference was to the seven ages of the Church in which true witnesses have been persecuted.⁴

In a similar way Daniel's "time, times, and half a time" (Daniel 7:25), the time during which a prophetic king would have the saints in his hand, was seen by Bale to correspond to forty-two prophetic months during which the Gentiles would tread down

¹Ibid., p. 405.

²Ibid., p. 300.

³Ibid., pp. 269-70.

⁴Ibid., p. 394.

the Holy City (the Church, Revelation 11:2),¹ namely the entire Church age.

In this emphasis on the universality of various apocalyptic symbols and numbers in Revelation Bale reflects the idealist approach so popular in the medieval period. He is able to correlate such a position with specific historical references by means of the principle of the two churches. On a universal level the patterns of contention between the elect of God and the church of Satan occur continually throughout recorded human history. The specific historical references simply further illustrations in microcosm of the overall struggle. Such an interpretation provided at the same time a Protestant theory of history and a source of encouragement for the present crisis.

Bale's Influence

Bale proved to be not only a popularizer of the historicist approach to Revelation outlined by Luther and others, but also an innovative contributor to the development of apocalyptic exegesis in his own right. In the Image of bothe churches he used the integrating principle of the two churches to collate the popular theory of the Antichrist with both historicist and idealist traditions of the medieval expositors. The result was the first major apocalyptic treatment written in English in the sixteenth century. Bale's success was due to his ability to use the symbols of Revelation to demonstrate universal principles which could be seen to apply in any age, and specific personal historical examples

¹Ibid., pp. 374 and 386.

of the same throughout the course of church history.

Bale's Image provided a basic paradigm for future English interpreters of Revelation. Certainly the most famous of those was John Foxe, whose monumental work The Acts and Monuments of matters happening in the Church, used Bale's general themes to develop a thoroughly articulated Protestant explanation of church history.¹ Bale's association with Foxe began about 1548, and they maintained a close friendship through and after the Marian exile.² In the preface to his 1570 edition of Acts and Monuments Foxe made an open acknowledgement of his debt to Bale:

I have here taken in hand, that as other story writers heretofore have employed their travail to magnify the Church of Rome, so in this history might appear to all christian readers the image of both churches, as well of the one as of the other; especially of the poor oppressed and persecuted church of Christ.³

Despite this clear reference to Bale's commentary, and the obvious fact that Foxe was using Bale's basic methodology, the martyrologist did not adopt any specific references from the Image. At the time he published his "Book of Martyrs" [1563] Foxe was already at work on his own commentary of Revelation,⁴ which demonstrated considerable independence from his English colleague. An earlier work, however, the Latin play Christus Triumphans [1556], reflects Bale's influence quite clearly. The play was

¹See T.B. Blatt, The Plays of John Bale (Copenhagen: Gad, 1968), p. 104.

²M. Aston, "Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?" History, vol. 49, 1964, p. 167.

³Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. 1, xix, italics mine.

⁴Foxe, Eicasmī seu meditationes in sacram Apocalypsin, 1587.

simply a dramatic presentation of the Apocalypse. The players included both allegorical figures and historical personages which interact with one another. The format clearly follows Bale's understanding of general forces or movements in history and specific people in every age who act them out.¹

Toward the end of the sixteenth century apocalyptic excitement was high in Britain and remained so well into the first half of the seventeenth. The defeat of the Spanish armada in 1588 served as a sure confirmation that the confrontation between the two churches was nearing a climactic end. England found herself not only "the ruler of the waves" but also at the head of those forces leading in the final assault on Antichrist.

During this period Bale's model of a historical progression of fulfilled prophecy became the foundation for numerous commentaries on Revelation. Among the most significant of these expositors were: John Napier, Thomas Brightman, and Joseph Mede.

Napier, the Scotsman best known as the inventor of logarithms, was a talented exegete with a special interest in John's Apocalypse. In 1593 he published A plaine discovery of the whole Revelation of Saint John.² At the heart of this work was a section which presented the text of Revelation in one column, a paraphrase of the same in the second, and a historical guide to the fulfillment of the prophecy in the third. Following Bale's general approach regarding the progress of history as outlined in Revelation the

¹For a discussion of this influence and a summary of current literature on Bale and Foxe, see Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, pp. 73-83.

²J. Napier, A plaine discovery... (Edinburgh: 1593).

laird specialized in calculating the dates of various future events.¹

Thomas Brightman, a pastor in Bedfordshire, produced a massive tome entitled, Apocalypsis Apocalypseos, Id est, Apocalypsis D. Joannis analysis et scholiis illustrata, in 1609.² When in 1611 the work was printed in English, it gained a large following, and ran through three publications between 1615 and 1644. Following Bale and Foxe in basic approach, Brightman developed a theory which neither of his predecessors fully articulated, namely that England was the "elect nation."³ In contrast to Bale and Foxe, Brightman also postulated a literal early millennium, a four-hundred year portion of which he felt had already transpired. Like Napier, he busied himself with the calculation of future prophetic events.

Joseph Mede, a fellow at Christ's College, Cambridge, and an erudite linguist, published his Clavis apocalyptica⁴ in 1627. In this work he too attempted to correlate the symbols of Revelation with corresponding events and personalities in history. Going beyond Brightman in his millennarianism, Mede placed the one-thousand year reign of Christ totally in the future. Mede's work was largely responsible for the upsurge in millennial interest in Britain during the seventeenth century.

¹See P. Christianson, Reformers and Babylon, pp. 97-100; and R. Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, pp. 139-143.

²T. Brightman, Apoclypsis Apocalypseos... (Frankfurt: 1609).

³Christianson, Reformers and Babylon, pp. 100-07.

⁴J. Mede, Clavis apocalyptica (Cambridge: 1627).

Perhaps a more significant influence at the popular level resulted when Bale's ideas began to appear in the margins of Bibles. One of the most widely read Bibles in later Tudor and Stuart Britain was the relatively inexpensive Geneva Bible, which during the reign of Queen Elizabeth ran to seventy complete editions. The notes on Revelation in this popular text came directly from Bale and Bullinger.¹ Another popular work in Tudor England, Matthew's Bible (1551) included notes on Revelation drawn exclusively from Bale, and directed the reader to the Image of bothe churches for additional information.²

¹F.F. Bruce, The English Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 90; and R. Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, pp. 3-6, 42-43.

²*Ibid.*, p. 23.

V. Use of Authorities

The Anglicans reformers were, to a man, students of the "New Learning." The humanism which had developed so markedly at Cambridge and Oxford in the first half of the sixteenth century, left its mark upon them. They were all quite well versed in the classics. Like Erasmus, however, their real love was for the Scriptures, and the great commentators of the Golden Age of the Church, the ancient Fathers. That is not to say that other ages were neglected. Although giving relatively little attention to Scholastics, the commentaries, sermons, treatises, etc., of the continental reformers, often procured at considerable expense, filled their library shelves. In most cases this intense interest in biblical exegesis did not develop until after the experience of conversion. Thomas Cranmer's secretary recorded how the young reformer was first influenced by Luther's writings, and then immersed himself in the Scriptures. Having been thus prepared, he then,

...gave his mynde to good wryters both newe and olde, not rashly running over them, for he was a slowe reader, but a diligent marker of whatsoever he redd, for he seldom redd without pen in hand, and whatsoever made eyther for the one parte or the other, of things being in controversy, he wrote it out yf it were short, or at least noted the author and place....¹

The selective use that Cranmer and his colleagues made of these authorities, (i.e., which authors were chosen and how

¹Morice's *Anecdotes of Archbishop Cranmer*, "printed in *Narratives of the Reformation*, J.G. Nichols, ed., (Westminster: The Camden Society, 1849), p. 219.

they were used), furnishes us with helpful insight as to their chief exegetical goals, and demonstrates the overwhelming pragmatic nature of the early Anglican reformation.

The ancient Fathers

The biblical humanists of northern Europe were mainly responsible for an explosion in patristic text editions in the first four decades of the sixteenth century.¹ Erasmus, his friend Beatus Rhenanus, as well as Willibald Pirckheimer, and Sigismund Gelenius, all of whom remained loyal to Rome, were responsible for publishing a great bulk of the Fathers' works. Erasmus alone edited works on Arnobius, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyprian, Hilary of Poitiers, Irenaeus, Jerome, and John Chrysostom. We must not forget the work of the Protestants John Oecolampadius, Konrad Pellican, Kasper Hedio, and Wolfgang Musculus, who also provided several key editions.²

Obviously the demand for these works must have been great. The reformers, working with the conviction that the Reformation was basically a recovery of the "faith of the Fathers," combed through the new editions of the Fathers garnering support for their doctrine and practice. The Romanists were just as anxious to demonstrate the "perpetuity" of their traditions

¹See L. Spitz, The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963) p. 276.

²See W. Haaugaard, "Renaissance Patristic Scholarship and Theology in Sixteenth-Century England," Sixteenth Century Journal, vol. 10, (1979), pp. 37-60.

and dogmas.

The English reformers were especially fond of parading authorities. In his published debates with Stephen Gardiner, Cranmer referred to more than thirty patristic writers.¹ Ridley cited forty-four commentators in his works, often including specific references. Even in their less formal writings, the Anglicans always seemed to have an appropriate Father to cite on a particular point. In a personal letter, Latimer, after quoting Lyra on a passage from Matthew chapter sixteen, went on to cite Chrysostom and Jerome before adding, ". . . I would have you read the third treatise [of Augustine] on St. John's epistle, . . . I would fain have you better acquainted with the Collectanea of Bede. . . ." ² These men were steeped in the Fathers. The libraries of Cranmer and Bale would be the envy of scholars in any age.³

Despite this reverence for the Fathers of the ancient Church, the Anglican divines were ever careful not to overstate the authoritative value of such sources. It was obvious to all but the most theologically myopic that there were major differences of opinion among the great commentators. The reformers were quick to affirm that every man, with the writers

¹Cranmer, An Answer unto a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 1-367.

²Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 313.

³Strype indicates that the Archbishop was able to purchase a portion of Bucer's library to add to his considerable holdings. Memorials, p. 249. See G. Duffield, The Work of Thomas Cranmer, pp. 341-365 for a catalogue of the extant library. Bale's library is described by Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, p. 23, see notes.

of Scripture excepted, was prone to err. The problem then in using the Fathers was how to extract the pure ore and avoid the dross. Two general principles were advanced to meet this need. First, the authority apart from which no human idea carried any weight was the Word of God. How should one evaluate the Fathers, asked Ridley, by following the rule laid down by Augustine

...that we should not...think it true because they they say so, do they never so much excel in holiness and learning; but if they be able to prove their saying by the canonical scriptures, or by good probable reason... which doth orderly follow upon a right collection and gathering out of the scriptures.¹

Cranmer collected references from the Fathers themselves testifying to the truth that without the Scripture's confirmation of a doctrine, no human authority was of any value.² Hooper explained that all godly ancient Fathers did not write to judge the Scripture, but rather with the expectation that their writings would be judged by the Scripture.³

The second axiom to be followed was that one must not be swayed as to the validity of an interpretation merely on the basis of majority support. If such a principle were in effect, Hooper noted, the Pharisees would have been correct and Christ wrong.

Consider, that many time[s] the true church is but

¹Ridley, P.S., p. 114. See also Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 29.

²Cranmer's list includes: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyril, Gregory I, Theophylact, Bruno, Bede, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 22-36.

³Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 170, see also p. 238.

a small congregation as Esay saith...(Except the Lord had left us a remnant, we had been as Sodom). Therefore is not the interpretation of scripture obligated unto an ordinary power, nor to the most part; as Noe, Abraham, Samuel, David, and Christ's time testifieth.¹

As we would expect, the reformers, with the exception of Bale, gave more credence to the ancient Fathers than to any other group. Cranmer's arguments were characteristically sealed with a reference to "God's Word and the doctrine of the old writers."² In similar fashion, Ridley, after stating his view on the material substance of the sacrament, "so as not to exhibit conceit" took account of the "old ecclesiastical writers" on the issue. To avoid any misunderstanding, he added, "When I speak of ecclesiastical writers, I mean such as were before the wicked usurpation of the See of Rome was grown so unmeasurably great"³

The use of patristic authorities in questions of exegesis was generally restricted to three main areas of concern: 1) the interpretation of passages which bear upon the eucharist question; 2) the general issue of scriptural interpretation and authority--the sole sufficiency of the Bible, canonicity, etc.; and 3) the theme of "justification by faith alone." The chart which follows itemizes the number of patristic citations each reformer made on these major themes.

As we can clearly see the greatest concentration of references was on the eucharistic issue (over seventy percent).

¹Ibid., p. 84.

²Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 11, 13, 32, 38.

³Ridley, P.S., p. 28.

		Ambrose	Augustine	Chrysostom	Cyprian
The	Bale	0	2	0	0
Eucharist	Bradford	0	14	6	2
Question	Cranmer	23	87	21	17
	Hooper	4	26	4	8
	Latimer	2	2	2	1
	Ridley	0	15	10	6
The	Bale	0	0	0	0
Authority	Bradford	0	0	2	0
and	Cranmer	4	10	5	2
Interpreta-	Hooper	0	6	1	1
tion of	Latimer	0	1	0	0
Scripture	Ridley	0	0	0	0
Justifi-	Bale	0	0	0	0
cation	Bradford	0	2	0	0
by	Cranmer	5	7	3	0
Faith	Hooper	0	1	0	0
	Latimer	0	0	0	0
	Ridley	0	0	0	0
Miscella-	Bale	0	3	1	0
neous	Bradford	1	1	2	0
	Cranmer	3	2	1	0
	Hooper	1	9	3	0
	Latimer	0	2	1	0
	Ridley	0	7	2	0

The figures shown in this chart are taken from reading notes garnered from the Parker Society editions of the works of the listed reformers. These editions contain virtually all the exegetical writings of each author. Only definite references to a specific named Father are included. Admittedly there is some degree of subjectivism involved in determining whether the issue upon which an authority is used is truly exegetical or of a more theological nature.

	Hilary	Irenaeus	Jerome	Justin Martyr	Origen
Bale	0	0	0	0	0
Bradford	1	3	3	0	1
Cranmer	6	9	15	5	8
Hooper	0	4	9	1	3
Latimer	1	0	0	0	0
Ridley	0	0	1	0	5
<hr/>					
Bale	0	0	0	0	0
Bradford	0	0	0	0	0
Cranmer	0	2	5	0	2
Hooper	0	0	0	0	0
Latimer	0	0	4	0	0
Ridley	1	0	2	0	0
<hr/>					
Bale	0	0	0	0	0
Bradford	0	0	0	0	0
Cranmer	1	0	3	0	0
Hooper	0	0	0	0	0
Latimer	0	0	1	0	0
Ridley	0	0	0	0	0
<hr/>					
Bale	0	0	3	0	0
Bradford	0	0	2	0	0
Cranmer	1	0	1	0	0
Hooper	0	1	0	0	0
Latimer	0	0	0	0	0
Ridley	0	0	1	0	3

	Tertullian	Theodore	Total Citations
Bale	0	0	
Bradford	1	1	
Cranmer	6	13	366
Hooper	12	2	
Latimer	0	0	
Ridley	4	0	
Bale	0	0	
Bradford	1	0	
Cranmer	4	0	53
Hooper	0	0	
Latimer	0	0	
Ridley	0	0	
Bale	0	0	
Bradford	0	0	
Cranmer	0	0	23
Hooper	0	0	
Latimer	0	0	
Ridley	0	0	
Bale	0	0	
Bradford	1	0	
Cranmer	1	4	65
Hooper	2	0	
Latimer	0	0	
Ridley	2	0	

This is what we would expect in view of the fact that the interpretation of the Lord's Supper dominated the thoughts and writings of these men. On this problem, Augustine reigned supreme, followed in turn by Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Ambrose.

In the area of scriptural authority and interpretation, the pattern is somewhat different. Once again Augustine is the most often cited, the majority of references coming from his hermeneutical work De Doctrina Christiana. Jerome, the great translator of the Latin Vulgate, is next. His citations for the most part deal with the nature of Scripture, especially its authority and uniqueness. Chrysostom is used most often to comment upon the proper interpretation of the text, how it was to be read and appreciated.

On the subject of "justification by faith," which received less than five percent of the total number of citations, Augustine once again was dominant, followed by Ambrose, Jerome, and Chrysostom.

These preferences coincide generally with the testimony of the reformers themselves. In his "Articles of Visitation of 1550" in the diocese of Canterbury, Cranmer listed the authors which should be included in a parish church library. These were: Augustine, Basil, Gregory Nazianzus, Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Theophylact.¹ A similar list given by Latimer included: Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Hilary, as the best writers of the Ancient Church.²

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 161.

²Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 319.

Of the six men considered in this chapter, Cranmer made the greatest use of the Fathers on each of the three main issues. Hooper was next in total citations, followed in turn by Ridley, Bradford, and then Latimer. Bale, who was mainly concerned with apocalyptic matters, did not seem to find these authorities too helpful. Outside of the odd reference to Augustine, Chrysostom, and Jerome, he neglects them.

Of greater relevance than the number of citations, is the way in which the various Fathers were used. In general it may be stated that the use of patristic authorities was almost totally restricted to works of a polemical nature. As a rule the Fathers were not employed as authorities in sermons, commentaries, or other exegetical treatises.¹ They were reserved for theological argumentation, as witnesses called to the bar to testify as to the truth of a given proposition. This is best illustrated for us in the writings of Hooper, who, of all those considered here, produced the

¹The exceptions in this case prove the rule. Cranmer did cite Augustine, Ambrose, and Chrysostom in his "Homily on Faith," (P.S. vol. 2, pp. 138, 142, 143); and his "Notes on Justification," are made up totally of scriptural references and the views of numerous Fathers on those passages (Ibid., pp. 203-211). The bulk of his many works however, are polemical and liberally sprinkled with patristic quotations. Ridley's extant exegetical works are virtually all polemical. Latimer's numerous sermons contain only five citations from the early Fathers on points of interpretation (P.S., vol. 1, pp. 19, 195, 204, 252-253, and 463). In the case of Bradford, his numerous treatises include works on "The Lord's Prayer," "Belief," "The Ten Commandments," "Prayer," "The Second Coming," and "The Sober Use of the Body," all of which are bare of patristic reference. When he does cite the Fathers in sermonic material, all references fall in one sermon--predictably the topic is the "Lord's Supper," (P.S., vol. 1, pp. 87, 88, 90, 91, 97, 98, 100).

most purely exegetical material. We will recall that of our writers, Hooper ranked second after Crammer in the total number of patristic citations, yet in his exposition of four selected Psalms covering almost two-hundred pages of the Parker Society editions of his works, he failed to make one reference to a Father on an exegetical question.¹ The same is true of his short annotations on the thirteenth chapter of Romans.² In his commentary of the book of Jonah, which runs to over one-hundred pages, Hooper did make three references to Augustine, but these were not applicable to the text at hand, but were rather a part of an extended digression on the sacramental nature of Christ's body in the eucharist.³

The medieval fathers

As noted above, Bale is the exception in his use of the early Fathers, in that, in contrast to his fellow writers, he rarely cites them. Exactly the opposite occurs when we move into the medieval period. Only Bede and Ratramnus are given significant attention by the majority of the Anglican reformers,⁴ while Bale made considerable use of the

¹Hooper, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 176-374.

²Ibid., pp. 93-116.

³Ibid., pp. 513-536.

⁴Ridley was deeply affected by reading an English translation of Ratramnus' work The Body and Blood of the Lord, who, the reformer remembered, "...first pulled me by the ear." P.S., p. 206, see also pp. 159, 174, 200, 205; and Hooper P.S., vol. 2, p. 405. For Bede see Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 118, 227.

apocalyptic works of Primasius,¹ Joachim of Fiore, Haymo of Halberstadt,² Albertus Magnus, Nicholas of Lyra, John Wyclif, and John Huss.³

With the exception of Cranmer, who occasionally cited selected Schoolmen when it suited his purpose, the English reformers almost totally ignored the exegesis of the Scholastics. Since each reformer confessed to having been "noselled" in the doctors while at University, their rejection of this group was dramatic. Turning from the Schoolmen was in most every case, the result of a religious awakening. This is exemplified by the experience of Latimer, who wrote of Bilney, the man who led him to the reformed faith, ". . . to say the truth, by his confession I learned more than before in many years. So from that time forward I began to smell the word of God and forsook the school-doctors and such fooleries."⁴ There was no going back.

Contemporary authorities

Turning now to sixteenth century authorities we are faced with something of a paradox. It is quite clear that the Anglican divines acknowledge a great debt to their continental

¹Primasius was a sixth century bishop of Hadrumetum in North Africa. An edition of his commentary on the Apocalypse was published in Cologne in 1535. His works are included in Migne, PL, vol. 68, pp. 407-936.

²Haymo was a ninth century Carolingian expositor, see Bale, P.S., p. 256.

³See Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, p. 23.

⁴Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 335.

brethren in the area of biblical studies, yet for some reason they were reticent to cite the German and Swiss or French exegetes on matters of interpretation.

The works of the Continental reformers were most certainly in the hands of the Anglicans. Cranmer claimed to have read all that Oecolampadius and Zwingli had written,¹ yet the Archbishop only mentioned the former in discussing how he was being misused by some, and never cited the latter. Although general praise is afforded to Luther's numerous writings,² none of the Englishmen, except Bale, quote from the Wittenberger on a single exegetical issue. The same can be said for Melancthon.³ Hooper attributed his conversion to the reading of certain writings of Zwingli and Bullinger.⁴ To the latter he confessed: "You have, I am sure, no one who loves you more in Christ than yourself."⁵ Hooper devoted himself to Bullinger's writings, and journeyed to Zurich to sit at the reformer's feet for two years. Bullinger was the godfather of the Hooper's first child Rachel. After returning to England, Hooper's numerous letters to Zurich were filled with requests for his

¹Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 344.

²Ibid., p. 14; Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 525; Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 212.

³Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, p. 7; Ridley, P.S., p. 160; Latimer, P.S., vol. 1, p. 141.

⁴Original Letters, P.S., vol. 1, p. 33.

⁵Ibid., p. 34.

teacher's lectures on various books of the Bible,¹ which were to be hand copied at the bishop's expense. Hooper tried, apparently without success, to have Bullinger's notes printed in England.² Yet we find no citations or quotations from Bullinger on exegetical matters in any of Hooper's works. He requested all the printed works of Zwingli, Bibliander, Pellican, Gualter, Oecolampadius, and Gesner be sent to him in England, but none of these writers were ever used as authorities.

John Bradford did give credit to the influence of Martin Bucer, his "father in the Lord," upon his exegesis.³ Bradford enjoyed a close relationship with the exile from Strassbourg from 1549-1551, while Bucer was Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. Bradford's treatise "The Restoration of All Things,"⁴ was largely dependent upon Bucer's commentary on Romans,⁵ yet this debt was only cryptically acknowledged in

¹Specifically Hooper requested notes on: Romans, Isaiah, Daniel, and Kings. Ibid., pp. 54, 70, 73, 83, 90, 95.

²Ibid., p. 92.

³Bradford, P.S. vol. 2, pp. 19, 355.

⁴Ibid., pp. 351-364.

⁵Bucer, Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae epistolarum D. Pauli Apostoli... Tomus primus. Continens metaphrasim et enarrationem in Epistolam ad Romanos.... (Strasbourg: 1536). In addition to this highly influential work on Romans, Bucer had published Enarrationum in evangelia Matthaeis Marci, & Lucae.... (Strasbourg: 1530), his commentary on the Psalms, S. Psalmarum libri quinque ad ebraicam veritatem versi, et familiari explanatione elucidati (Strasbourg: 1529), parts of which appeared in English, as a Commentary on the Gospel of John (Strasbourg: 1528). In spite of the undoubted availability of these works to Bradford, we find no reference to them in any of his writings.

Bradford's statement, "This is my cogitation in this matter, and not mine only, but the cogitation of one who was my father in the Lord. . . ." ¹

It seems quite remarkable, with their proclivity to show themselves supported by the Fathers in exegetical questions involving the eucharist, scriptural interpretation, and justification by faith, that the early Anglicans should neglect their contemporaries with whom they shared so much common ground on the same issues. A partial answer to this enigma may lie in the nature of their opposition. Using Luther, Zwingli, Bullinger, Calvin, et al., would hardly have added to their case in the eyes of Stephen Gardiner. This hypothesis is given credence by the fact that the one contemporary authority they do cite and quote, was a man who carried some weight with the more enlightened Roman Catholic divines, namely, Erasmus. Hooper classified Erasmus, along with Chrysostom and Lactantius, as those ". . . best learned in the tongues among Christian writers." ² Cranmer lauded the humanist as one of the key authors to be included in a church library. ³ Erasmus was used as an authority on "the manner of speech used among the Gentiles" in explaining Christ's words, "Give us this day our daily bread." ⁴ Occasionally he was cited to add

¹Bradford, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 355-356.

²Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 342.

³Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, p. 161.

⁴Hooper, P.S., vol. 1, p. 240.

historical detail, as on the city of Corinth.¹ The widely circulated Paraphrases of Erasmus were generally supported by the Anglicans, and cited quite often.²

The nature of their opposition in doctrinal questions however is only some help in solving this problem of the omission of contemporary authorities. If their fellow reformers were only absent from polemical works, the case would be a strong one. We find however, that contemporary expositors are rarely if ever used in homilies, sermons, or meditations. How can one explain the omission of Luther for one, in Cranmer's "Notes on Justification" when he cites not only ancient Fathers, but medievalists, and even scholastics, in support of this central doctrine of the Reformation?³ It seems that the Anglicans in their non-polemical works were concerned with the pragmatic. In their desire to bring the layman of England into the truth of the Gospel, perhaps they reasoned that the inclusion of names associated in the past with heresy, would serve as a red herring, diverting attention from the central message. On the other hand one could assume that the average church goer in Edwardian England would have little knowledge of continental reformers and thus why use them to support a given interpretation? There is, of course, the strong probability that contemporary authorities were being used, but

¹Ibid., p. 484; see also Cranmer, P.S., vol. 1, pp. 220, and 363.

²Ibid., pp. 139, 143; Latimer, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 263, and 341.

³Cranmer, P.S., vol. 2, pp. 203-211.

were not cited, for the reasons given above.

Once again we find that Bale is the odd man out. In contrast to his fellow Anglicans, his greatest degree of dependence was upon sixteenth century Protestant expositors. Easily the most influential writer in Bale's background was the French reformer Francis Lambert (1486-1530). His work Exegeseos in sanctam Divi Joannis Apocalypsim¹ was cited thirty-eight times by Bale in the margin of his commentary on Revelation. The English reformer translated, paraphrased, and summarized whole sections of the book.² Next in number of references was Sebastian Meyer (1465-1545),³ followed in turn by Luther and Oecolampadius, with eleven citations each, Otto Brunfels with nine, and John Tritemius with eight. Moderns who were quoted infrequently included: Bibliander, Brentius, Bullinger, Erasmus, Melanchthon, and Zwingli.

The general approach of these pre-Elizabethan Anglican reformers to the use of authorities in matters of exegesis follows the classic pattern of sixteenth century Protestantism. A thorough knowledge of and reverence for the early Fathers was tempered by the strong conviction that these men were but fallible human teachers. As such, their opinions were to be critically assessed. The pre-sixth century writers

¹Lambert, Exegeseos in sanctam Divi Joannis Apocalypsim (Basel: 1528).

²See Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, p. 24.

³Meyer, In Apocalypsim Divi Johannis Apostoli, Commentarius nostro huicseculo accommodatus, natus et aeditus (Zurich: 1539?).

were seen as the chief repository of accurate exegetical information. The medievalists were generally ignored with the exception of a few "safe" individuals whose opinions were largely confined to matters relating to the Lord's Supper.

As with Erasmus, Colet, and Tyndale, the Anglican divines rejected the interpretative work of the Schoolmen outright. The scholastic period was, to the reformers, the "dark age" of exegesis.

Finally, five of the six men under consideration in this chapter were remarkably reticent to employ contemporary authorities in matters of interpretation. Bale, with his emphasis on apocalyptic literature, was the maverick. His work rested firmly upon medieval and contemporary authors.

Conclusion

Although undoubtedly influenced by continental developments, the English reformers, due to the special needs and demands attendant to their situation, did not apply their exegetical skills along lines laid down in other centers of Protestant thought. The forces which operated to shape early Anglican exegesis were not only theological but historical as well.

The "New Learning" which developed at Cambridge and Oxford in their formative university days, equipped these men to do significant work in the field of biblical interpretation. They shared a common desire to reach behind the Latin Vulgate, to a purer, older text. Although generally quite skillful in Greek, there was no scholar among the English divines who was as well equipped in all the biblical languages as Luther or Calvin. Perhaps if Tyndale had been allowed to return to his homeland and continue to develop as an expositor, he might have filled such a niche.

Even though the last two decades of the life of King Henry VIII opened the doors to reform, the vicissitudes of his reign produced a climate of insecurity for developing Protestant exegetes. Henry's break with Rome over the divorce of his first wife was more an issue of authority than theology; at heart the King remained a Catholic. Certainly there were positive signs of reform, including: the appointment of Thomas Cranmer to succeed Archbishop Warham in 1532, the institution of the "Ten Articles" and the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536,

and the production of a vernacular Bible to be placed in all parish churches in 1538. Yet just one year later the "Six Articles" served to restore orthodox Catholic doctrine, in name at least, with the full blessing and support of the crown. In 1540 the King worried Protestants by wedding the Roman Catholic Catherine Howard, after having removed, disgraced, and executed Thomas Cromwell. Surely such signs from the "head" of the English Church reinforced the position and authority of the leading defenders of the "old faith." Even more disturbing perhaps, was the burning of Anne Askew in 1545, primarily for her opposition to transubstantiation.¹

When Edward VI came to the throne in 1547 the reformers gained political as well as ecclesiastical power. Their opposition however maintained key positions of influence within the Church. This juxtaposition forced the finest Protestant minds in England to focus attention on two central priorities. First of all they worked to present a skillful apologia for key doctrines of the Reformation, especially on the issue of the Lord's Supper. Secondly, for four of the six men considered here, there were the manifold responsibilities of ecclesiastical office, made even more difficult by the need to personally supervise reforms within each respective bishopric. For these two reasons at least, the theological writings of the Anglican reformers were generally either polemical or practical. With the exceptions of Bale and Hooper, they produced no complete commentary on any book of the Bible.

¹Bale, P.S., pp. 137-248.

In terms of innovation the English reformers did refine the art of interpreting figurative language due to the ongoing debate over the eucharist question. Bale certainly was a major figure in the development of British apocalyptic exegesis. Generally however, the Anglicans seemed content to draw upon the continental reformers, especially Luther, in matters of technical exegesis. Had the young King lived longer, and had the English Reformation continued unchecked, perhaps they would have finally been able to turn attention to systematic biblical interpretation. As it happened, the long and peaceful reign of Elizabeth I provided just such an opportunity for those Protestant scholars returning from exile after the demise of Queen Mary Tudor.

CONCLUSION

Toward the end of the year 1496 Oxford University was caught up in a wave of excitement, as even doctors of divinity and law turned out with books in hand, to listen to a series of lectures on the Pauline epistles delivered by John Colet, a young, relatively obscure scholar who had recently returned from a study tour abroad. Sixty years later, on a March day in 1556, churchmen, scholars, undergraduates, representatives of the crown, and the towns people of Oxford were again galvanized by an event, yet this time the interest was in a macabre melodrama, the public burning of the man who for over twenty years had served as the primate of all England, Thomas Cranmer. These scenes, so dissimilar at first glance, were key events in a revolution which rocked England in the first half of the sixteenth century--a revolution in biblical interpretation.

Colet's lectures were a local phenomenon due to the fact that they were a radical break from medieval exegetical method. Cranmer's execution was a desperate attempt by the Church and Queen to crush the Reformation in England, a movement which was built upon the new hermeneutical methodology. The developments in biblical studies which transpired between these two events were both dramatic and far-reaching. During these six decades the foundations were laid for the modern work of textual criticism and grammatico-historical exegesis. As we survey this period in English ecclesiastical history various central

themes become apparent.

The one factor linking all nine men together and distinguishing them from the typical exegesis of the fifteenth century was the conviction that reform in and revitalization of the Church would be closely bound-up with a return to the simplicity of biblical truth. They wanted, to a man, to pull away from the accumulated layers of interpretative subtleties and view the text of Scripture in a fresh way. Following the principles and patterns of humanism, these divines possessed a mutually high regard for grammar, linguistic analysis, and historical context as the basic tool of exegesis. A working knowledge of the original languages was of course an essential prerequisite to the task. Erasmus was the great pioneer in this area providing for those who followed him, a credible Greek text of the New Testament and an appreciation of the importance of textual criticism.

A second issue which runs throughout the writings of these men involves the tension which develops between divine revelation and human reason. This surfaces in their view of the value of human philosophy vis a vis Scriptural truth. Erasmus the humanist, steeped in classical literature, sought for God's truth wherever it could be found. Although acknowledging the Scripture as the purest expression of divine knowledge, he felt that the Christian was well advised to read widely in human philosophy and secular literature if for no other reason than as a preparation for the deeper understanding of the Bible. For Colet, the books of "heathen authors" were influenced by the Devil.¹

¹Colet, En Cor., p. 110.

Exposure to such works, he urged, would not aid the Christian in understanding Scripture, but rather would become an obstacle to accurate interpretation. Although neither Tyndale nor the early Anglican reformers were as pointedly against human philosophy as Colet, they continually stressed the sole-sufficiency of the Bible, which is able to supply men with all relevant truth. We see in Colet and Erasmus the continuation of a debate which began in the second century after Christ. Erasmus was in the tradition of Justin Martyr who wrote, "Whatever has been uttered aright by any men in any place belongs to us Christians; for next to God, we worship and love the reason (Word) which is from the unbegotten and ineffable God. . . ." ¹ Colet on the other hand would have allied with Tertullian as he asked,

What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem? What between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? ...Away with all projects for a 'Stoic,' a 'Platonic,' or a 'dialectic' Christianity! ²

Perhaps we see here the seeds of the evangelical anti-intellectualism which stalks the modern Church, refusing to understand or even dialogue with those who do not bear the proper stamp of orthodoxy.

Another aspect of this tension is found in the means employed to reconcile revelation with reason. This is clearly seen in the way the writers deal with elements of the Old Testament. For Erasmus the Old Testament contained crude

¹Justin Martyr, Apology, 2:13, as quoted in H. Bettenson, ed. Documents of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 8.

²Tertullian, De praescriptione haereticorum, 7; as quoted in Bettenson, *ibid.*, p. 10.

myths which when taken into their literal sense were far below the sublime "philosophy of Christ" seen in the Gospels. This seeming paradox was harmonized by means of allegorical interpretation. The "hidden meaning" contained within the base "letter" was to be sought as the more highly valued source of divine light. Thus Erasmus retained and developed allegorical method throughout his life.

In Colet we find the problem dealt with on a different basis. Uncomfortable with allegorical exegesis, the Dean, in interpreting the first chapters of Genesis, developed a theory of accommodation to explain the more problematical elements of the Mosaic narrative. God in His wisdom and grace described truth in "poetic fictions" which were accommodated to mankind's infantile understanding. In this way the rude Hebrew people were drawn toward a purer truth gradually, in accordance with their limited capacities.

For Tyndale and the Anglicans neither allegory nor the divine accommodation of revelation is put forward as an explanation of Old Testament difficulties. When human reason and the text of Scripture seemed discordant, the former was to be suppressed in favor of the latter. Man was to humble himself before an all-knowing God.

The understanding of the "senses" of Scripture is another important point of development in this study. For Erasmus, following the long tradition of early and medieval commentators, there were multiple meanings possible in a given text, although the proper interpretation of each was to be based upon

the literal sense. When the literal sense did not seem to edify, the interpreter was to look for truth on another level. In sharp contrast, Colet saw the essence of truth in simplicity and thus in singularity of meaning. This type of approach is clearly seen in Tyndale whose desire to find the "one true sense" extended as far as parabolic passages, and caused him to bypass John's Revelation. The true meaning of the text for Tyndale and the early Anglicans was the "normal" understanding of the words to the original hearers. Such an emphasis proved useful to Cranmer, Ridley, et al. in their eucharistic controversy with Gardiner and others. The English reformers again and again stress the "intent" of a figurative phrase as the crucial factor in arriving at its proper interpretation.

On the matter of the choice and use of authorities we find a good deal of similarity between the various writers. They, with the exception of Bale, favoured the ancient Church Fathers, above commentators of other ages. Augustine was easily the favourite source in questions of an exegetical nature. As we would expect, they rejected the hermeneutical methods of the Schoolmen, yet surprisingly they were all quite reticent to cite or quote contemporary authorities. Once again Bale, with his apocalyptic specialty, was the exception. Tyndale was the most sparing in his use of other expositors for support or reference. The Anglicans confined their citations mainly to exegetical questions dealing with the Lord's Supper.

APPENDIX I

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF PRINTED GREEK GRAMMARS:
1478-1556

- Chrysoloras, Manuel. Emanuelis Chrysolorae Erotemata Grammaticae.
Venice: 1478.
- Théodore of Gaza. Grammatices Introductionis libri quatuor.
No date is given for the first edition. Republished
in Florence: 1515.
- Lascaris, Constantine. Grammatica Graeca. Milan: 1495.
- _____. Erotemes. Venice: 1495.
- Guarino di Favera. Thesaurus Cornucopiae et Horti Adonidis.
Venice: 1496.
- Manutius, Aldus. Grammaticae Institutiones Graecae. Venice: 1515.
- Erasmus, Desiderius. Primus liber grammaticae institutionis
Theod. Gazae. 1516.
- Croke, Richard. Tabulae Graecas literas compendio discere
cupientibus sane quidem utiles. Leipzig: 1516.
- Melanchthon, Philipp. Graec. gramm. Institutiones. 1518.
- Oecolampadius, John. Graecae Literaturae Dragmata. 1518.
- Amerot, Adrien. Compendium Graece Grammatices, perspicua
brevitate complectens quicquid est octo partium orationis.
Louvain: 1520.
- Varennius, Joannes. Syntaxis Linguae Graecae. 1522? Republished
in Lyon: 1558.
- Ceporinus, Jacques. Compendium grammaticae Graecae. 1522?
Republished in Paris: 1529.
- Rithaymērus, Georges. Compendium in octo partes orationis &
temporum formationes. 1524? Republished in Cologne: 1536.
- Camerarius. Institutio puerilis litterarum graecarum. 1526?
- Gunterius, Johannes. Syntaxis Graeca, nunc recens et nata
et aedita. Paris: 1527.

¹This table is based upon Louis Kukenheim's Contributions
À L'Histoire De La Grammaire Grecque, Latine et Hébraïque À
L'Époque De La Renaissance (Leiden: E J. Brill, 1951), pp. 134-135.
This listing is not exhaustive.

- Erasmus, Desiderius. De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione Dialogus. 1528.
- Budé, Guillaume. Commentarii Linguae Graecae. Paris [?]: 1529.
- Metzler, Johannes. Primae grammatices Graecae partis Rudimenta. Hagenau: 1534.
- Ceratinus, Jacques. De Sono literarum praesertim graecarum libellus. 1529 ? Republished in Paris: 1587.
- Macropedius, G. Graecarum Institutionum Rudimenta per tabulas compendiose accurateque perstricta. 1530? Republished in Paris: 1554.
- Clénard, Nicholas. Institutiones absolutissimae in linguam graecam. 1530? Republished in Paris: 1540.
- _____. Meditationes graecanicae in artem Grammaticam. 1531. Republished in Paris: 1550.
- Oridryus, Arnoldus. Summa linguae graecae. 1531.
- Varennius, Jean. Syntaxis linguae graecae. 1532.
- Amerot, Adrien. De Dialectis diversarum declamationum graecanicarum. 1534.
- Lonicer, Joannes. Graecae grammaticae Methodus. 1536.
- Lopadius, Lodovicus. Graecae linguae Rudimenta. 1536.
- Veraga. De omnibus graecae linguae partibus libri V. 1537.
- Micyllus. Elementale introductorium. 1539.
- Estienne, Henri. De abusu linguae Graecae. Paris: 1543.
- Mekerchus, Adolph. De veteri et recta pronuntiatione linguae Graecae Commentarius. 1544.

APPENDIX II

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF PRINTED HEBREW GRAMMARS:
1501-1556¹

- Anonymous. Introductio Utilissima Hebraice Discere Cupientibus
Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1501.
- Pellican, Conrad. De modo legendi et intelligendi Hebraeum.
1503-1504.
- Reuchlin, Johannis. De Rudimentis Linguae Hebraicae. Pforzheim:
1505.
- Nebrija. De Litteris Hebraicis. Alcalá: 1507.
- Tissard, François. Grammatica Hebraica. Paris: 1508.
- Guidacier, Agathie. Grammatica Hebraicae Linguae: quae
necessaria pueris: iocunda senibus: dulcis &
diuino se cretorum comes. Rome: 1514 [?].
- Levita, Elias. בְּחִינֵי. Rome: 1517 [?].
- _____. ספר חכמים. Rome: 1518.
- Reuchlin, Johannis. De accentibus et orthographia linguae
hebraicae. Hagenau: 1518.
- Böschensstein, Jehan. Hebraicae Grammaticae Institutiones.
Wittenberg: 1518.
- Capito, Wolfgang. Hebraicarum institutionum libri duo. 1518.
- Levita, Elias. פרקי אליהו [Rome]: 1520.
- Münster, Sebastian. Epitome hebraicae grammaticae. 1520.
- Abraham de Balmes. Grammatica hebrea una cum latino. Venice: 1523.
- Münster, Sebastian. Institutionis Grammaticae in Hebraeam
Linguam. 1524.
- Wakefield, Robert. Roberti Wakefeldi, sacrarum literarum
protessoris eximii, Oratio de laudibus & utilitate Trium
linguarum, Arabicae, Chaldaicae, & Hebraicae. London:
Wynkyn de Worde, 1524.

¹This table of Hebrew grammars is based upon the bibliographic work of Louis Kukenheim, Contributions À L'Histoire De La Grammaire Grecque, Latine et Hébraïque À L'Époque De La Renaissance (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951), pp.139-141.

Münster, Sebastian. Sefer ha-Dikduk, Grammatica Hebraica Absolutissima Eliae Levitae Germani nuper per Seb. Münsterum iuxta hebraismum latinitate donata, postquam lector aliam non facile desiderabis.... 1525.

. Vocabula Hebraica irregularia....per Eliam Levitam pulchre explicata... & per Seb. Münsterum ex Hebraismo in Latinam linguam uersa. 1525.

Aurogall, Matthew. Grammatica Hebraeae Chaldaeque linguae a Matthaeo Avrogallo. Wittenberg: 1525.

Alphonse de Zamora. Introductiones Artis grammaticae hebraicae nunc recenter editae. Alcalá: Academia Complutensia, 1526.

Münster, Sebastian. Chaldaica Grammatica. 1527.

Campensis (Van der Kampen), John. Ex variis libellis Eliae grammaticorum omnium doctissimi huc fere congestum est opera Johannis Campensis quicquid ad absolutam grammaticen Hebraicam est necessarium. Louvain: 1528.

Clénard, Nicholas. Tabula in grammaticam hebraeam. Louvain: 1529.

Wakefield, Robert. Syntagma de Hebraeorum codicum incorruptione. London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1530.

Pagnini. Institutionum hebraicarum abbreviatio M. Sancte Pagnino Lucensi autore. Paris: R. Estienne, 1546.

Münster, Sebastian. M'lecheth h.-Dikduk ha-shalem, Opus grammaticum & consummatum ex variis Elianis libris concinnatum. 1556.

APPENDIX III

A TABLE OF THE REFORMER'S EXEGETICAL
WORKS PRINTED IN ENGLISH UNTIL 1556¹

Bucer, Martin. Bucer's harmonies of the four Gospel accounts of Christ's passion were translated into English and included in several versions of the English Primer, including:²

A goodly prymer in englyshe, newly corrected and printed, with certeyne godly meditations and prayers added to the same, very necessarie & profitable for all them that ryghte assuredly vnderstand not ye latine and greke tongues. London: William Marshall, 1535.

A Prymer in Englysshe with dyuers prayers & godly meditations. London: Thomas Godfray, 1534 or 1535.

A Prymer in Englyshe, with certeyn prayers & godly meditations, very necessary for all people that vnderstonde not the Latyne tongue. London: William Marshall [1534]

"The Passion of our sauowre Christe" in Ortulus anime. The garden of the soule: or the englisshe primers... newe corrected and augumented. [Translated by George Joye] Strasbourg: Francis Foxe [Antwerp: M. de Keyser], 1530.³

. Bucer's S. Psalmarum libri quinque ad ebraicam veritatem versi, et familiari explanatione elucidati, Strasbourg, 1529, was translated into English as follows:

The Psalter of Daud in Englishe purely and faithfully translated aftir the texte of Feline: euery Psalme hauynge his argument before, declarynge brefly thentente & substance of the wholl Psalme. Strasbourg: Francis Foxe [Antwerp: M. de Keyser], 1530.

The Psalter of Daud in Englyshe purely and faythfully translated after the texte of Felyne: euery Psalme hauynge his argument before declarynge brefely thentete & substance of the hole Psalme. London: [Thomas Godfray], n.d.

¹This table lists the printed exegetical works of the major Reformers which were translated into English in the first half of the sixteenth century. The works of English divines discussed in the text are excluded.

²See D.F. Wright, Common Places of Martin Bucer (Appleton: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1972), pp. 461-463.

³Joye's translation is the basis for the three previous works.

The Psalter of Dauid in english truly translated out of Latyn. Euery Psalme hauynge his argument before, declaryng brefely thentent & substaunce of the whole Psalme. London: [Edward Whitchurch], n.d.

Bullinger, Johann H. A briefe and compendious table, in a maner of a concordance openyng the waye to the principall histories of the whole Bible. Gathered by H. Bullynger, Leo Jude, etc. 1550.

_____. Commentary vpon the seconde epistle to the Thessalonians. Southwarke: J. Nicolson, 1538.

Calvin, John. Certain homilies conteining profitable admonition for this time. [London: Hugh Singleton], 1553.

Erasmus, Desiderius. A booke called in latyn Enchiridion and in englysshe the manuell of the Christen knyght. [London?]: W. de Worde, 1553.

_____. A exhortation to the diligent studye of scripture. Translated by W. Ray. [Antwerp]: H. Luft, n.d.

_____. An expositoryon of the XV psalme [?]: J. Waylande, 1537.

_____. The first tome of the Paraphrase vpon the newe testament. 1545.

_____. The Paraphrase of Erasmi vpon ye Epistle of Paule unto Titus. [?]: J. Byddell, [1535].

Frith, John. An exposition of Daniel Chapter 4. 1529.

_____. A pistle to the Christen reader. The Revelation of Antichrist. Antithesis wherin are compared to geder Christes actes and oure holye father the Popes. Antwerp: 1529.

Joye, George. The exposition of Daniel the Prophete gathered oute of Philip Melanchton, Johan Ecolampadius, Chonrade Pellicane and out of Johan Draconite.... Geneva [Antwerp?], 1545.

Lambert, Francis. An exposition on Hosea ch. 4. [?]: 1548.

Luther, Martin. A very excellent & swete exposition vpon the 22 psalme. Translated by Miles Coverdale. Southwork: J. Nycolson, 1537.

_____. A ryght notable sermon vppon the twentieth chapter of Johan. Translated by R. Argentine. Ippeswich: A Scoloker, 1548.

Zwingli, Huldereich. A short pathwaye to the ryght and true vnderstanding of the holye Scriptures. Translated by J. Vernon. Worceter: J. Oswen, 1550.

I. Printed Books

- Alcock, J. An exhortacyon made to Relygyous systems in the tyme of theyre consecracyon by the Reverende fader in god Iohan Alcok bysshop of Ely. Westminster: no date.
- Aldridge, J.W. The Hermeneutics of Erasmus. Zurich: EVZ-Verlag, 1966.
- Althaus, P. The Theology of Martin Luther. Translated by R. Schultz. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963.
- Anderson, C. The Annals of the English Bible. 2 vols. London: Wm. Pickering, 1845.
- Anonymous. Trattato Utilissimo Del beneficion de Giesu Christo crucifisso. verso i Christiani. Venice: Bernardinum de Bindonia, 1543.
- Arber, E., ed. The First Printed English New Testament. London: Bloomsbury, 1871.
- Atkins, J.W.H. English Literary Criticism and the Renaissance. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1947.
- Augustine, A. De Doctrina Christiana. Translated by J. Shaw. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1873.
- _____. The Confessions of St. Augustine. Edited and translated by Marcus Dods. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1876.
- _____. Opera Omnia. 11 vols. Paris: 1836-1839.
- Bacon, Roger. Opus Majus. Translated by R.B. Burke. New York: Russell and Russell, 1962.
- Bale, J. A brefe comedy or enterlude concernynge the temtacyon of our lorde and sauer Jesus Christ, by Sathan in the desert... No place of publication: F.D. [?], 1538.
- _____. A brefe comedy or enterlude of Iohan Baptystes preachynge in the wyldernesse, openynge the craftye assaultes of the hypocrytes, with the gloriouse baptye of the Lorde Jesus Christ. [1538?] London: T. Osborne, 1744.
- _____. Illustrium Maioris Britanniae scriptorum, hoc est, Angliae Cambriae, ac Scotiae summarium, in quasdam centurias diuisum. cum diversitate doctrinarum atque annorum recta supputatione per omnes aetates a Iapheto sanctissimi Noah filio... Gippeswici: Ioannem Ouerton, 1548.

- _____. The Select Works of John Bale. Edited by H. Christmas for the Parker Society. Cambridge: The University Press, 1849.
- _____. The Vocacyon of Joha Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie in Irelade his persecucios in [the] same, & finall delyuerance. Rome [London: Hugh Singleton]: 1553.
- Baring-Gould, S. Post-Medieval Preachers. London: Rivingtons, 1865.
- Bauckham, R. Tudor Apocalypse. Oxford: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978.
- Becon, T. The Catechism. Edited for the Parker Society by J. Ayre. Cambridge: The University Press, 1844.
- _____. Early Works. Edited for the Parker Society by J. Ayre. Cambridge: The University Press, 1843.
- _____. Prayers and Other Pieces. Edited for the Parker Society by J. Ayre. Cambridge: The University Press, 1844.
- Bietenholtz, P.G. History and Biography in the Work of Erasmus of Rotterdam. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1966.
- Blatt, T.B. The Plays of John Bale. Copenhagen: Gad, 1968.
- Blench, J.W. Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964.
- Boase, C.W. Register of the University of Oxford. 27 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1885.
- Bouyer, L. "Erasmus in Relation to the Medieval Biblical Tradition." The Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 2, Edited by G. Lampe. Cambridge: The University Press, 1969.
- Bradford, J. The Writings of John Bradford...Containing Letters, Treatises, Remains. Edited for the Parker Society by A. Townsend. Cambridge: The University Press, 1853.
- _____. The Writings of John Bradford, M.A. Edited for the Parker Society by A. Townsend. Cambridge: The University Press, 1848.
- Brewer, J.S., ed. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII. 30 vols. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office: 1870. Reprinted, London: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1967.

Brightman, T. Apocalypsis Apocalypseos.... Frankfort: 1609.

_____. A Revelation of the Revelation.... Amsterdam:
Iudocus Hondius and Hendrick Laurens, 1611.

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Lutterworth Press, 1953.

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Room, 1950.

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Book Press Room, 1956.

_____. Thomas Cranmer, Theologian. New York: Oxford University
Press, 1956.

Brown, F., Driver, S.R., Briggs, C.A., eds. A Hebrew and English
Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: The Clarendon Press,
1966.

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Press, 1970.

Bucer, M. Enarrationum in evangelia Mattaei, Marci, & Lucae....
Strasbourg: 1530.

_____. S. Psalmarum libri quinque ad ebraicam veritatem versi,
et familiari explanatione elucidate. Strasbourg: 1529.

_____. Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae epistolarum D.
Pauli Apostoli...Tomus primus. Contines metaphrasim et
enarrationem in Epistolam ad Romanos.

Bullinger, H. A Commentary upon the seconde Epistle of S. Paul
to the Thessalonians. Translated by R.H. Cambridge: 1538.

_____. The Decades of Henry Bullinger, Minister of the Church
of Zurich. Translated by H.I. 4 vols. bound in 2. Edited
for The Parker Society by T. Harding. Cambridge: The
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sity of Pennsylvania Press, 1953.

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